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THEY GOT THEIR MAN

*On Patrol with
The North West Mounted*

By the Same Author

ARCTIC TRADER

RED HUNTERS OF THE SNOWS

THE VANISHING FRONTIER

ETC.

Wages and Hours

[Handwritten musical notation]



THE AUTHOR

THEY GOT THEIR MAN

ON PATROL WITH
THE NORTH WEST MOUNTED

PHILIP H. GODSELL, F.R.G.S.

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Illustrated

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FOREWORD

SINCE that first handful of scarlet-coated riders rode forth from the pierced stone walls of Lower Fort Garry a little over six and a half decades ago the thin red line has spread and multiplied until the barracks of the Mounted Police are to be found in even the most remote corners of the land.

Loping behind their dog-sleds, urging on their slant-eyed huskies beneath the ghostly scintillations of the Aurora; thawing their frozen beans and bannock before the roaring flames of a camp-fire; crawling into their robes at sixty below to sleep in icy snowdrifts; guiding their buoyant birchbarks through the spume and froth of tumbling rapids or down some sylvan stream, at all times keeping vigilant watch o'er trader, trapper, Redman and Eskimo alike, the Men of the Mounted have played no small part in conquering the Silent Places and rolling back the frontier from the prairies to the Polar Sea.

I first came into contact with the North West Mounted Police at Norway House thirty-four years ago when, as a seventeen-year-old recruit to the ranks of the Hudson's Bay Company, I saw Constables Cashman and O'Neill depart to arrest the Chief and Medicine Man of the outlaw Saulteaux—a tribe feared alike by Indians and Whites—and during the ensuing years the officers and men of the Silent Force have been my constant and close companions.

From rock-bound Labrador to the saw-toothed Endicotts of Alaska, and from the land of Hiawatha to the Polar igloos of the Stone Age Cogmollock Eskimos, our trails have frequently criss-crossed. We have taken turn about breaking trail on snowshoes for our dog-teams; swapped the gossip of trail and trap-line around the leaping flames of the camp-fire; spread our bed-rolls together in tepees, igloos, trading posts and cabins, and known the intimate companionship that is bred beneath the jewelled canopy of the Northern skies.

In the ensuing pages I have tried to present these men as I knew them; their trials, their failures and their accomplishments,

as seen through the eyes of a Northerner who knows the bite of an Arctic blizzard, the gnawing pangs of hunger, and the tragedy and camaraderie of the Great Lone Land—the land one learns alternately to love and hate—the land whose strange magnetism draws one ever back to its granite bosom to wrestle still again with the immutable forces of Nature.

By dog-team, canoe and stern-wheeled steamer I have covered most of the terrain dealt with in this volume; come into personal contact with most of the officers and men mentioned herein, and mingled with the natives, prisoners and dog-runners, witnessing the drama of History in the making on America's last frontier at first hand.

For their kindness in supplying information, furnishing photographs and correcting manuscripts, etc., I am deeply indebted to Commissioner Stuart T. Wood; Major T. B. Caulkin, Superintendent of "N" Division; Inspector Alan T. Belcher, formerly of Cambridge Bay, Victoria Land, and Constable R. C. McDowell.

I am equally indebted to the following ex-members of the Force for similar co-operation: the late Major-General Sir James H. MacBrien, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Commissioner from 1931 to 1938; Inspector W. J. D. Dempster; Inspector F. H. French; Inspector K. F. Anderson; Superintendent A. H. L. Mellor, formerly of C.I.B. Department, Ottawa; Corporal Storm Piper; Corporal "Paddy" Conway; Staff-Sergeant S. G. Clay; Sergeant MacBrayne; Corporal Bonshor; the late Corporal W. A. Doak; and many others, both in and out of the Force, too numerous to mention.

PHILIP H. GODSELL, F.R.G.S.

1463 PEMBINA HIGHWAY,
FORT GARRY, WINNIPEG,
MANITOBA, CANADA.

January 15th, 1940.

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CHAPTER I
SKAGWAY'S LORD OF MISRULE

GOLD in the Klondyke! Gleaming yellow gold for the taking! From the ends of the earth a motley multitude surged northward, all bent on tearing from the bosom of Mother Earth the dynamic metal which spelled affluence and riches. From *habitant* homes in Quebec came swarthy French Canadians to mingle with Celestials from the Pacific, gold-crazed sons of Broadway and the Bronx, Cockneys from distant London, mackinaw-clad miners and glamorous sirens from 'Frisco's infamous Barbary Coast; all northward-bound.

Skagway, port of entry to this promised land, sprawling in scattered disarray in the shadow of Alaska's saw-toothed mountains, gazed with increasing wonder at the heterogeneous horde of mixed humanity that the overcrowded and unseaworthy ships continued to spill ashore along its crowded waterfront.

From that July day in 1897, but a few short months before, when the *Excelsior* had casually unloaded nearly a million dollars worth of gold and nuggets on the waterfront at San Francisco, the stampede had started. Then the *Portland* had docked at Seattle and discharged another ton of yellow gold from the Klondyke diggings. And from the inflammatory spark ignited by the news of these astounding shipments commenced the greatest gold-rush the world has ever known.

Not all the Argonauts, however, who descended in their teeming thousands upon astounded Skagway were armed with pick and shovel and gold pan. Mingling with the seething multitude who planned to dig for gold was an army of parasites who intended to fatten on the toil of others. There were glib-tongued confidence-men, fugitives from justice, tin-horn gamblers, and ladies of easy virtue who smiled with painted lips and Madonna-like faces on the red-shirted miners whom they hoped to mulct of their hard-earned wealth.

From the outset Skagway had been hopelessly unprepared to cope with this sudden and overwhelming rush of raucous humanity. Caught unawares, Uncle Sam had set up no law enforcement

to deal with this unforeseen stampede into this land of snow-capped peaks and eternal glaciers. Tawdry speakeasies and boot-leg joints rose side by side with brawling brothels, gambling hells and dance-halls where Vice sat enthroned in all its tinselled glory. Hold-ups, robbery, and even murder, went unchecked, and all rock-bound Skagway needed to weld these vulture factions into an organized group which could dominate the city and rake in its golden tribute was one unscrupulous and resolute Lord of Vice. And, in the person of the slim, debonair, black-bearded Jefferson Randolph Smith, Fate provided the swashbuckling adventurer destined for such a role.

"Soapy" Smith, as he had long been known around the gold camps of California, was skulking in a reformed Denver, deep in despair and poverty, when word reached him of the gold-strike in the Klondyke. Here was a chance to mend his shattered fortunes, and those of his gang of thugs and card-sharps, at the expense of the ever-increasing stream of *cheechakos* surging northward to the goldfields.

Borrowing passage money, "Soapy" promptly sailed for Skagway, saw that the situation was to his liking, and made plans to gather his mob around him. Ere long there disembarked on the frozen waterfront of Skagway key members of the nefarious gang that had fleeced the gold camps of the West.

The first to step ashore was the unsavoury "Bishop" Bowers, an oily and personable rascal whose *forte* was to assume the guise of a God-fearing man and steer those worth robbing into the clutches of the others. Then followed Slim Jim Foster; grey-haired and benign Tripp, a venerable reprobate who had long since demonstrated his immense capacity for evil; George Wilder, Jackson and others—all broke but supremely hopeful that lawless Skagway would prove to be *their* Eldorado.

Though but thirty-seven years of age, "Soapy" Smith had already acquired a colourful, if unscrupulous, background. Born in 1860 of a prominent and highly respected Southern family that had fallen on evil days since the Civil War, young Randolph had gravitated to the West, become a cow-puncher, ridden the historic Chisholm Trail in leathern chapperjos and ten-gallon hat behind a herd of longhorns, mingled with Indian fighters, buffalo runners, and quickly learned to hold his own with the six-gun men and desperadoes who still infested the western frontier.

With his genteel appearance, well-modulated voice, and dark, hypnotic eyes, he soon discovered his ability to inspire respect

and liking in those he wished to sway, and though his name had been linked with more than one shooting scrape, his winning ways and ingenious brain usually succeeded in keeping him out of trouble. From the arduous life of a cow-puncher he graduated to the easier money of marked cards and the gambling tables until, at last, he wandered into Denver and, on the windy corner of Seventeenth Street, earned the sobriquet that was destined to ring on down the ages.

To the accompaniment of quick-fire witticisms, the twenty-seven-year-old con-man stood on a soap-box exhorting the crowd, wrapping cake after cake of soap with greenbacks ranging from one to twenty dollars and offering them to sceptical onlookers at ten cents apiece. Incredulously the crowd looked on. A man sauntered hesitatingly forward, tendered his dime, and before the amazed eyes of those about him unwrapped a genuine twenty dollar bill. Another pushed self-consciously forward, and another, each to peel from his ten cent cake of soap a genuine greenback. Suddenly the crowd went berserk. Jostling and fighting, they surged forward to get their cakes of soap. But "Soapy's" sleight-of-hand was quicker than the naked eye . . . only the members of his own intimate and personal gang got the real money, which was returned to "Soapy" when the fleecing was all over.

Then the gold-boom town of Creedo, California, gave "Soapy" a chance to demonstrate and perfect his genius for organization. Almost overnight "Soapy" and his gang of card-sharps, gamblers and confidence-men took over this rip-roaring town of cribs and square-fronted saloons, and the soap-box orator found himself enthroned dictator of as tough a gang as ever slit a gullet or turned a crooked card. No ballyhoo was necessary. Gold-burdened miners flocked to the saloons to be picked up by "Soapy's" smooth-tongued gangsters, inveigled into a crooked gambling game or given doped liquor, slugged, robbed and cast ruthlessly aside. The gang soon worked with the precision of clockwork, the immaculate broadcloth-clothed leader taking his rake-off and protecting his cronies from the righteous anger of those so flagrantly fleeced until the boom subsided.

Within twenty-four hours of his arrival in Skagway the ubiquitous and resourceful "Soapy" had already become well and favourably known to the leaders of the local underworld, and by the time his gang arrived was only awaiting the oppor-

tunity to dominate the scene.

The opportunity was not long in coming. As he entertained the passing tide of mackinaw-clad humanity that paraded Skagway's Broadway with the notorious shell-game, two muffled explosions sounded in the distance, followed by the startled and sinister cry of "Murder!" Through the crowd burst a high-booted miner, his hair awry, his alcohol-brightened eyes glinting with excitement.

"Come on, boys," he yelled, "let's join the necktie-party. They're stringin' up Jack McFey, bar-keeper at the Palace. He's just shot Marshal Rowan and Andy McGrath."

With one accord the crowd stampeded down the wooden sidewalk past square-fronted saloons and stores, anxious to be in at the killing.

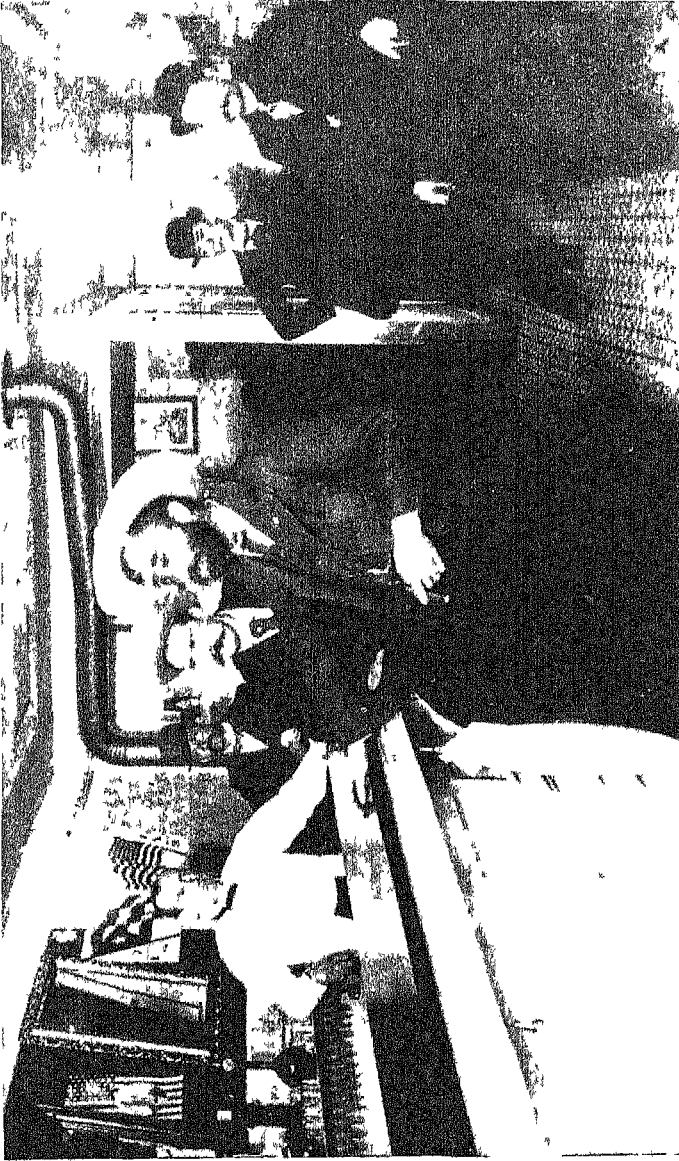
"Quick, Bowers," yelled "Soapy". "Round up the boys, and tell them to bring their shooting irons."

Like predatory buzzards the gang assembled. Led by their slouch-hatted leader they elbowed their way through the mob until the chalk-like face and limp body of the struggling bartender loomed through a sea of black felt hats and bearded faces. A miner was slipping a noose around his neck while another was slinging the rope over the cross-piece of a telephone pole. From the lips of the frightened wretch poured incoherent cries for mercy.

Six-shooter in hand, the bearded figure of "Soapy" faced the mob. "Drop that rope!" he commanded, his steely eyes boring challengingly into those of the man who held it. "I'll let daylight through the first man who dares to touch it," he snapped as the gang closed in with levelled rifles and revolvers. "Isn't this supposed to be a law-abiding town?" he demanded in his slow, hypnotic drawl. "Isn't this man entitled to a fair trial by his fellow-men? Boys—you-all are crazy. How d'ju know he's guilty? Give the man a chance."

As the crowd milled hesitatingly about, "Soapy" followed up his advantage. In a split second the gang had closed around the captive and were hustling him swiftly off to the protection of the jail.

That night another ebullition of angry feeling swept the town when word was circulated that the wife of the murdered marshal had given premature birth to a child. Again mob anger flared. Grim-faced, tight-lipped and sullen, determined to wreak their vengeance on either the murderer or those who had interfered



"SOAPY" SMITH IN "JEFF'S PLACE"



THE TRAIL OF '98

[Dept of the Interior

with their attempt at summary justice, the crowd surged towards the jail. Then, through the stampeding mob, spread word that "Soapy" was collecting money for the widow. Slowly the crowd dispersed and ere the rising sun had painted the snow-capped peaks with lemon and scarlet it was learned that "Soapy" Smith had handed Widow Rowan a thousand dollars in gold and bank-notes, with the promise of more to come. His name was on everybody's tongue. Not only had he succeeded in attaining public recognition, but, with it, he had won the acclaim of Skagway.

Losing not a minute he proceeded to consolidate his gains. With a flow of silvery oratory he addressed a cheering crowd next morning. "We've got to have law and order here," he told them, his black eyes flashing. "From now on I'm going to run this town—and run it right!" And, to the amazement of an incredulous citizenry, "Soapy" set out forthwith to make good his promise. His first step was to knit the criminal elements into an organized whole. Then he opened a combination dance-hall, gambling joint and saloon as headquarters, giving it the euphonious title of "Jeff's Place". And behind an enormous desk in a room behind the bar he established himself as Skagway's Citizen and Lawgiver Number One.

But this impudent assumption of authority was not destined to go unchallenged. Viewing the swift and sinister developments with growing alarm, Sam Lowell, Doctor Good, Captain Tanner, Major Strong and other leading citizens snapped into action. That night was born the Vigilance Committee of One Hundred and One which promptly proceeded to throw a monkey-wrench into the machinery of "Soapy's" spurious government. Next morning bearded miners and citizens alike gazed with surprise at the proclamation posted in prominent places throughout the town:

NOTICE

All confidence sharks, bunco-men, sure-thing men and other objectionable characters are hereby warned to leave Skagway and the White Pass. Failure to comply with this warning will be followed by prompt and energetic action by the Committee of One Hundred and One.

It was a crisis that "Soapy" had obviously not anticipated. But he met the situation with his usual *savoir-faire* and prompti-

tude, his unerring knowledge of human nature telling him that only by a swift and theatrical counter-stroke could he hope to maintain his dominant position.

"To *hell* with the Committee," he jeered as worried henchmen brought the news. "We'll run those high-binders out of Skagway. Want a Committee, do they? Well—we'll give them a *real* Committee, and raise their ante, too!"

That night there was a crowded meeting of Skagway's hoodlums, and next day, check by jowl with the notice of the vigilance committee, appeared another one, signed by Jefferson Randolph Smith, summoning one and all to an indignation meeting to be held in Sylvester Hall.

"Soapy" greeted the noisy assemblage in his best oratorical form. "Pioneers and fellow citizens," he roared, "we're here to-night to form an honest to God committee to protect the citizens of Skagway. We deplore the existing conditions, which are due—not to bona-fide residents like ourselves—but to the hoodlums and off-scourings of all parts of the world who've gathered here. We'll protect our liberty, even at the cost of our lives."

Resounding roars of approval echoed from the meeting packed with "Soapy's" gangsters. "We'll show them who's running Skagway," he concluded at the end of his long tirade. "We're the pioneers and trail-blazers. We're the ones who are pushing the frontier northward. We're the ones who are going to have the last say."

Next day there emanated from the executive office at "Jeff's Place" the following bold announcement:

WARNING

The so-called Committee of One Hundred and One are hereby warned and notified that any overt act they may commit will be met by the law-abiding citizens of Skagway, and each and every member will be held fully responsible for any unlawful act. The Law and Order Committee of Three Hundred and Three will see that justice is handed out, and that no blackmailers or vigilantes are tolerated.

Signed: THE COMMITTEE OF THREE HUNDRED AND THREE.

This was turning the tables with a vengeance. The brazen audacity and insolence of the swift and resourceful reprisal

resulted in making the Committee of One Hundred and One ridiculous and the butt of jokes and ridicule. Soon the original Committee was forgotten and "Soapy" sat more securely upon his golden throne than ever. And so, while winter clamped down with icy breath, and seventy below weather held the vast transient population marooned in this wooden frontier "city", where restaurants served "mush and milk" at two dollars a bowl, and moose steaks at four dollars each, "Soapy" continued his lawless reign with little outward show of opposition.

From first to last the fleecing of the *cheechako* was thoroughly organized by the gang that preyed upon them. The inexperienced greenhorn didn't have a chance. From the very outset the cards were stacked against him. Even before he stepped ashore solicitous members of "Soapy's" mob were at the gang-plank sizing up those worth plucking, helping them ashore with their baggage, exuding kindness and gratuitous advice. Those selected for trimming were carefully steered by members of the gang to "saintly" "Bishop" Bowers, who, in his God-fearing role, issued good advice, warned them of the evils and pitfalls, and passed them on to those delegated to roll them. Even in the poker games there sat paid sharpers, while burly bouncers hovered in the background ready to pounce upon any angry *cheechako* who complained of being trimmed.

Even if a man resisted the Goddess of Chance there were the cribs with their harpies and doped liquor, while even in "Jeff's Place" it was no uncommon thing for a man with money to be doped or lured outside, slugged, robbed and left to his fate. With the dance-hall girls who served drinks and danced with visitors it was their duty first to ascertain how much money their partners possessed, tip off some heeler, and the entire machinery of the organization was brought to work to despoil them.

Robberies, hold-ups and murders became daily occurrences, and invariably went unpunished since the culprits were always shielded. So serious did the crime situation become that there was talk of martial law and of the United States troops being brought over from Dyca, five miles away. But "Soapy" merely laughed. "We've got 'em licked," he confided to his cronies. "*We* rule the roost and, what's more, we're going to keep *on* ruling it!"

Small wonder that, amongst the decent and long-suffering citizenry, forced to tolerate this gangster rule in the name of law

and order, there developed behind an outward show of acquiescence, a rapidly-growing feeling of revolt, a feeling that needed but place and opportunity to flame into a thundering volcano of violence.

As the dominating figure in Skagway, and king of the local underworld, "Soapy" faced the double problem of protecting the lawless while, at the same time, placating as far as lay in his power the respectable element in the community. His policy was to protect his own gang of confidence-men, crooks and harpies, whose graft and tribute flowed in an ever-widening stream of gold-dust into his headquarters at "Jeff's Place", while frowning on the hordes of unattached gangsters and gunmen who infested the place and hung around the saloons sizing up their prey, dogging them to some dark corner and shooting, or knifing them without compunction.

While able to some extent to control his own immediate gang he was totally unable to cope with the more disreputable gangster element who, with the boldness of pirates, dogged their victims into the mountain fastnesses, murdered them without hesitation, and squandered their spoils in the honky-tonks and dives of the city.

"The town of Skagway," reported Colonel Sam Steele of the North West Mounted Police as he passed through on February 14th, 1898, to take command of the Yukon, "is the roughest place in the world. Gambling hells, dance-halls and variety theatres are in full swing. 'Soapy' Smith with his gang of one hundred and fifty ruffians runs the town and does what he pleases. Almost the only people safe from them are the members of the Force. Robbery, and murder occur daily. People come here with money and, next morning, haven't the price of a meal. Shots are exchanged on the streets in broad daylight. At night the crash of bands and shouts of 'Murder!' mingle with the cracked voices of singers in the variety halls where wily box-crushers cheat tenderfeet and unwary travellers, inducing them to stand treat of which twenty-five per cent goes into their pockets. In the dance-halls the girl with the straw-coloured hair trips the light fantastic at a dollar a set. In the White Pass above the town the shell-game expert plies his game, while frequently some poor fellow is found lifeless on his sled where he sat down to rest, powder marks on his back and his pockets inside out."

Yet it was one of the peculiar quirks in the character of "Soapy" Smith that of the money that poured into his lap much

of it was squandered in helping out the unfortunate or despairing, or paying for funerals for the indigent. Rarely did an appeal to "Soapy" go unheeded. His accounts at the stores for food furnished to unfortunates assumed enormous proportions. To many in that crazy city of sin "Soapy" was looked on as benefactor and friend and they wouldn't hear a word against him.

When a transient apostle appeared penniless in Skagway, despairing of his hope of erecting a church and mitigating the evils of the place, word of which had already spread to Seattle and San Francisco, it was "Soapy" Smith who came to the rescue.

"Want to build a church, eh?" "Soapy" nodded approvingly and handed over two hundred dollars that lay on the gambling table before him. "Sure I'll help you build a church," he added. Visiting every crib and honky-tonk and gambling joint in town, "Soapy" handed the amazed preacher that night an additional five hundred dollars, with the promise of more to come. Again the people of Skagway shook their heads in blank amazement.

Hard on the heels of this came another sidelight on the contradictory character of Skagway's King of Vice. To "Soapy" came a harried miner with word that his young daughter had eloped with one of the gamblers. "He's got 'er workin' in one o' them dance-halls now," added the agitated father, "an' he's blowin' in her money."

"Go—get her!" "Soapy" nodded to one of his lieutenants.

Brought to the office at "Jeff's Place" the frightened girl cast herself with bitter tears into her father's arms and sought forgiveness. Angrily the gambler entered and attempted to take forcible possession of his prey.

"Enough of that!" snapped "Soapy". "This town's not so tough it can put up with rats who lead young girls astray. Get out!"

As the man remained rooted to the spot, truculent and defiant, "Soapy" turned to one of his aides. "All right—take him out and let him have it!"

Battered and beaten, his clothes torn to shreds, the gambler was hauled back fifteen minutes later, a mouthing, frightened wreck, to pay deference to Skagway's chief and receive peremptory orders to leave the city by first boat.

CHAPTER II

THE VIGILANTES

IN strange contrast to the lawless condition in Skagway was the peaceful calm that existed just across the line among the ice-clad peaks and eternal glaciers of the Yukon. There Commissioner Lawrence William Herchmer of the North West Mounted Police had installed a handful of scarlet-coated men under rugged Inspector Constantine.

The gold rush had not altogether taken the Mounted Police by surprise. For nearly a quarter of a century, ever since that July day in 1873 when the first of the Scarlet Riders had ridden from the pierced stone walls of Lower Fort Garry on their thousand mile trek to bring peace to warring redskins and drive the rum-runners from the West, their destiny had always pointed northward.

But it was not until May, 1894, that Inspector Charles Constantine was ordered to the Yukon to look the situation over and take formal possession of Forty Mile. In company with Staff-Sergeant Brown he proceeded down the Yukon to Fort Cudhay, collected customs duties and, leaving Brown to get acquainted, re-embarked on the mighty Yukon and proceeded homeward via St. Michaels. The following summer he returned with nineteen picked men, reared Fort Constantine, and settled down to the business of bringing the white man's law to a Yukon that consisted mainly of a few scattered trading posts and nomad Stick and Chilcat Indians who derived their living from hunting the moose, the caribou and the mountain goat.

Now, as Colonel Steele trudged northward, accompanied by Superintendent Aylesworth Bowen Perry, to relieve Constantine of his onerous command, Inspectors Belcher and Strickland, in their frozen huts on the blizzard-swept summit of the Chilcoot and White Passes, impersonated the law, collected customs dues, and saw to it that each candidate in this race to the Arctic Eldorado carried sufficient foodstuffs for a year.

At Dawson City, hub of the gold-fields, another handful of red-coated Mounties gave short shrift to those who thought to

emulate the ways of "Soapy" Smith. Murder meant swift and relentless pursuit by these bloodhounds of the Silent Places, followed by a quick and uncompromising end upon the gallows. Even small-time con-men were quickly caught and whisked within the Mounted Police enclosure to labour from dawn till dusk on the famous Dawson woodpile.

Having passed thirty million pounds of food, and collected a hundred and fifty thousand dollars in customs dues, the Mounted Police faced the problem of smuggling this gold through Skagway despite the fact that word had reached them that "Soapy" intended to transfer the funds to his own exchequer.

"The best thing to do," Colonel Steele suggested to the enigmatic Inspector Zac Wood, who'd been appointed to run the gauntlet of Skagway's hoodlums and carry the bullion south to Victoria, "is to circulate word you're on transfer to the prairies and stick the gold and notes into ordinary unlocked kit-bags."

Word was dropped in the proper quarters, and Wood was escorted to the top of the Pass and allowed to continue on with just sufficient men to pack the gold. Meanwhile the Captain of the Canadian Pacific steamer *Tartar* had been advised of the forthcoming shipment.

Arriving safely at Dyce Inspector Wood embarked with his bullion and men in a small boat and commenced to row across the inlet. But "Soapy's" gang had become suspicious. From out of the shadows loomed another boat. Loaded with ruffians, it bore swiftly down upon them until it became evident they intended to ram the Police boat. "Lay to!" came the peremptory command. For answer Wood and his men swung their rifles over the gunwales. The boat sheered off, but continued to hang closely in their wake.

As they neared the Skagway wharf the welcome funnels of the *Tartar* loomed up before them. But between themselves and the steamer stood a menacing mob of gangsters, headed by the implacable "Soapy" Smith himself. Hardly had Wood and his party stepped ashore ere the gang commenced to mill around and jostle roughly.

From the hurricane deck of the *Tartar* rang crisp orders. Like magic a string of bluejackets sprang to the rail with levelled rifles. Awed by the sinister threat, the mob swayed backwards. All but "Soapy" Smith. Defeated in his object he stepped

casually forward with extended hand. "Pleased to meet you, Inspector," he nodded affably. "Why don't you stick around and visit us a while? Let's show you the sights of Skagway."

"No thanks!" Wood snapped a curt refusal, closed in behind his men and, from the foot of the gangway, watched them carry the precious load to safety.

The riotous, lawless, never-to-be-forgotten winter of '97-'98 with its abysmal cold and raging blizzards closed with a tragic snowslide in the Pass which, in a split second, snuffed out the lives of scores of pack-burdened miners as they toiled wearily up the slope. Already eighty thousand gold-seeking Argonauts of every creed and nationality had passed through the rip-roaring town of Skagway; few of them fitted to cope with the unrelenting forces against which they had to pit their puny strength, many succumbing to hardship, accident and scurvy. Now gold-burdened miners were commencing to trail southward, eager for a sight of the White Lights and a taste of the flesh-pots of civilization, bringing with them fabulous stories of the wealth of the creeks. And "Soapy" Smith's gang, augmented by *cheechakos* who'd been robbed themselves, thrived as never before.

Pursued in the meantime by a Frankenstein of his own creation, and anxious at all costs to preserve amicable relations with the better element of Skagway, "Soapy" was forced notwithstanding to uphold those whose growing insolence was bringing appreciably closer an almost certain day of reckoning. To offset the growing clamour he increased his generosity to those in straitened circumstances, even inaugurating a campaign on behalf of the slat-ribbed dogs, deserted by their masters, that strayed, famished, through the town.

Prepared to grasp at anything that would help bolster up his difficult position, he received with an ostentatious display of patriotism word of the United States declaration of war against Spain. Promptly the Committee of Three Hundred and Three were reconvened and in a speech that throbbed with torrid patriotism "Soapy" waved aloft the Star Spangled Banner and called for volunteers. The applause was simply deafening.

Next day he launched the Skagway Guards, "Jeff's Place" being besieged by hungry, out-of-work *cheechakos* anxious to enlist if only to secure free transportation to more congenial climes. With his greenhorn recruits drilling clumsily in saloon yards, "Soapy" wired the Secretary of War and proudly waved before the eyes of the Committee a telegram from Secretary Alger

expressing his appreciation of "Soapy's" and Skagway's patriotic efforts. Carried to still further heights on this theatrical wave of patriotism "Soapy" next promoted a vast celebration in which the whole of Skagway was to co-operate to mark the approach of Independence Day.

Thorough in all he did, "Soapy" let no grass grow beneath his feet. With a clever mingling of jingoism, war talk, subtle flattery and persuasion, even the merchants and members of the dormant Vigilance Committee of One Hundred and One succumbed to his facile tongue. Determined now to place the whole affair under the ægis of Governmental approval "Soapy" even managed to beguile Governor Brady of Alaska into promising to be Chairman. Then, with characteristic cunning, he elected himself Grand Marshal for the day.

The Fourth of July, 1898, saw a new and metamorphosed Skagway draped with countless Stars and Stripes and hung with untold miles of blue and white and scarlet bunting. The streets were black with mackinaw-clad miners, business men and gamblers. Dance-hall harpies cheered side by side with respectable housewives. Children shouted with glee as they waved tiny flags supplied by the thoughtful marshal, while above the tumultuous cries of excitement echoed thunderous explosions of dynamite and the crackling of six-guns fired by boisterous revellers. To the blare of brass bands "Soapy" pranced on a milk-white steed at the head of the procession, his ten-gallon hat at a rakish angle, bowing with the showmanship of a Buffalo Bill to the shrieking plaudits of countless youngsters and the unrestrained delight of the cheering crowd. And when, in the small hours, the celebration concluded with a magnificent display of fireworks, and the last notes of the Star Spangled Banner floated on the air, "Soapy" Smith was indubitably the lion of the hour.

Congratulations poured in upon him. Men pounded him on the back. "Good old 'Soapy'!" others roared. And as the Governor clasped him warmly by the hand and commended his virile patriotism there was a suspicious moistness in the black eyes of Skagway's Citizen Number One. It was "Soapy's" hour of triumph!

Four days later John D. Stewart, homeward-bound from the frozen creeks of the Klondyke with visions of his home in the garden city of Victoria in his mind, dragged his leaden feet along the sidewalk of Skagway's Broadway. A year of back-breaking

toil with pick and shovel in icy weather among the frozen creeks had netted him a meagre three thousand dollars worth of gold dust. Still there were others—many of them—who'd made less. Many who'd lost all . . . including even their lives. As he felt the comfortable sausage-shaped roll of his deerskin poke he felt quite satisfied.

Little did he think as the sanctimonious "Bishop" Bowers cannoned into him with profuse apologies that he was already marked as prey for the vulture gang of "Soapy" Smith. Foot-weary and trail-worn, he found a room, cleaned off the grime of the trail and, poke in pocket, set out to exchange the heavy dust for bank-notes that could be more conveniently hidden in his belt. But the crafty Bowers was on the watch. Anxious to help, he steered the wily Scot away from one merchant after another, whispering of usurious exchange and tampered gold scales.

It was inevitable that the miner would eventually reach "Jeff's Place", where he was plied with drinks and congratulated on his good fortune. Caution momentarily cast aside by the heady fumes of red-eye whisky, he pulled out his poke and showed it. But his Scotch canniness reasserted itself as the crowd pressed just a little too close about him. He shouldered towards the door only to be jockeyed outside. Rough hands suddenly clutched him, a blackjack descended and all became darkness.

When Stewart arose groggily to his feet his poke was gone. Grim-faced and angry, he staggered into the saloon. Nobody knew a thing about it. At last he sought out "Soapy" Smith.

"Forget it," "Soapy" advised him, dismissing the incensed Scot with a casual wave of his hand.

But Stewart was not the forgetting kind. Stepping into the office of *The Alaskan* he poured the story of the robbery into the receptive ears of the editor. From there he gravitated from one store to another, picking out, with uncanny intuition those merchants inimical to "Soapy". By nightfall he'd aroused the wrath of half the populace of Skagway. Indignation meeting followed indignation meeting.

"The time's come to put a stop to this," swore Major Strong. "'Soapy' Smith and his gang of hoodlums must be given the bum's rush out of Skagway," shouted City Engineer Frank H. Reid to an angry crowd of citizens. "Murder stalks the streets. Even in broad daylight a man's not safe. Now's the time or never!"

All night the growing flames of rebellion, fanned by one fiery speaker after another, swept with the roar of a forest fire through Skagway. Rumour followed hard on rumour. An atmosphere of electric tension pervaded the city from end to end. Muttering mobs milled here and there. Cold-eyed men stalked appraisingly through dives and dance-halls. Inspired by a desire for decency the revitalized Committee of One Hundred and One swung into action. While firebrands advocated a concerted attack upon the criminal population, to be followed by a hanging bee and the expulsion of the entire crime element from the city, others of more mature judgment decided to call on "Soapy" Smith and demand the immediate return of the stolen poke.

But "Soapy", carried away by the success of his Independence Day Celebration, was strangely headstrong. "He lost his wad at cards," he snapped aggressively, his usual suave geniality cast aside. "It was an up and open game. He's just a piker!"

"All right," Reid warned him coldly. "You call yourself the boss of Skagway. We'll give you till six o'clock to find that poke and return it!"

Stalking angrily out of "Jeff's Place" the representative of the Vigilance Committee found the town a seething mass of wrathful men, many of them displaying unmistakable signs of inebriation and an alarming willingness to put any wild plan into execution. Hurriedly word was sent to United States Judge Shelbrede at Dyea requesting him to come at once as there was danger of a riot. An hour later he was in conference with the Committee.

"The question is," thundered the Chairman, "is the law going to be enforced in Skagway or are we to continue to submit to this impudent assumption of authority on behalf of the criminal element which makes the name of Skagway stink in the nostrils of decent men? Now's the time to call the turn on this rascal 'Soapy' Smith or never!"

Unaware of the dangerous undercurrent of feeling, relying on his glib tongue and the friendly terms on which he and the Judge had parted only four short days before, "Soapy" did not hesitate for a moment when he received orders to come over. "That's O.K.," he assured his cronies. "The Judge and I are friends."

Entering with an air of injured innocence "Soapy" commenced to voice his protests. Summarily Judge Shelbrede halted the incipient flow of oratory. "Stewart was robbed of his poke in *your* saloon," he interrupted crisply. "He was deliberately

lured there, knocked on the head and flagrantly robbed in broad daylight. You're responsible for whatever takes place on your premises. *That gold must be returned!*"

Startled by the ominous attitude of the Judge, "Soapy" faltered for a moment, then reiterated his assertion that Stewart had lost his money at poker.

Red with suppressed anger, the Judge was upon his feet, his accusing eyes boring into the black orbs of the bearded Chief of Skagway. "We'll give you just one chance." His words came cold and ominous. "If that gold isn't returned to its rightful owner by six o'clock I'll issue warrants for the arrest of every member of your gang. And I'll have them brought in—alive or dead!"

As the voice of the American Eagle spoke with authority new to him Smith paled and for the first time seemed to sense the seriousness of his dilemma. For the first time since setting foot in Skagway his swaggering bravado had failed him. The Judge had called his bluff! With head held high and eyes defiant, "Soapy" Smith stalked arrogantly from the room.

While Skagway waited tensely for the deadline, citizens and criminals prepared for every eventuality. Rifles and guns were oiled and loaded. Cartridge belts were buckled on. Judge Shelbrede swore in Captain Turner as Deputy U.S. Marshal. As five o'clock struck—with still an hour to go—Broadway assumed the appearance of a potential battleground, with mobs of high-booted, felt-hatted, mackinaw-clad men gathering in muttering knots, the sun glinting on the polished barrels of their rifles and six-shooters. More and more men gathered, centring their attention on the besotted nests of "Soapy's" hirelings. Madams, harpies and professors, frightened by the ominous and lowering crowd, fled for the protection of lovers or friends on the outskirts of the town. The deadline saw an ominous silence hovering over the city. All eyes were focussed on "Jeff's Place".

Suddenly the door swung open. On to the sidewalk stepped "Soapy" Smith, aggressive, jaunty and . . . alone. In his hand, instead of the stolen poke, was a gleaming Winchester carbine. Grim and defiant, he faced the mob.

"All right, boys," came his crisp and threatening challenge, "if you've anything to say . . . hop to it. We're ready for a show-down. I've four hundred men here, armed to the teeth and willing to fight for their rights and liberty."

For the space of three or four long, silent minutes he gazed

boldly at the mob. Then, turning contemptuously on his heel, he swung his rifle across his shoulder and paraded down the sidewalk. Dropping casually into a saloon he poured a neat whisky, threw it down, and continued his lone defiance of the crowd. For two hours he maintained his swaggering parade of Broadway.

Word of "Soapy's" challenge to the forces arrayed against him swept the city like wildfire. Prepared, and ready to strike at a moment's notice should the gang rally to their leader's support—but unwilling to attack a lone man, the Vigilantes waited. Then came word to assemble at Sylvester Hall to decide on a concerted plan of action.

Before a hall filled to overflowing J. Hayne of *The Alaskan* nominated Tom Whitton of the Golden North Hotel as Chairman, and announced the purpose of the call.

Engineer Reid interrupted. "This meeting was for the Committee of One Hundred and One," he shouted, leaping to his feet, "yet before me I see three times that number. And among them—the faces of 'Soapy' Smith's spotters and hoodlums. I move we adjourn to Juneau Wharf and admit tried citizens only."

"Carried!" Whitton's reply arose above the roar of applause. "We'll adjourn to Juneau Wharf right now. Only responsible citizens will be admitted. Crooks approach at their own risk. I'm naming six dependable citizens as guards."

He spoke to Frank H. Reid. The City Engineer nodded and proceeded to select his men.

Spilling noisily into the street, and led by the Chairman, they swept towards the pier, augmented by others from stores and houses along the route. At the wharf the guards lined up, checking each man as he passed or roughly turning him aside.

Back in his saloon, deserted at the crucial moment by the heartless rats he was protecting, "Soapy" Smith was trying to instil a little fighting spirit into his cowardly retainers when Slim Foster entered with news of the latest move.

"Well," drawled "Soapy", his elbow on the bar, a Winchester grasped in his other hand, "you birds may be getting cold feet—but not me. I'm going to hike right to the Juneau Wharf and swing that meeting our way. They'll listen to 'Soapy' Smith!"

Foster clutched his elbow. "For God's sake, 'Soapy', cut it. 'Don't be a fool,' he cried, his face as white as chalk. "What

better excuse could they have to let daylight through you? Stay right here and you'll be sitting pretty yet."

But "Soapy" Smith was adamant. With unwavering faith in his own hypnotic personality and his ability to swing a crowd he downed a hurried drink and made for the door. "See you later, boys," he called. "I'm going to bust that meeting."

Rifle in hand, "Soapy" strode once more down Broadway, again a lone and defiant figure. Through the smoky light he saw ahead the massed figures of the Vigilantes. Nearer, like dark pillars, arose the shadowy figures of the guards.

"Hands up!" Through the smoky haze of the midnight sun the words snapped like a whiplash. "Halt!" Rooted to the spot, "Soapy" swung his rifle forward. At that moment he recognized his enemy, Frank Reid. The muzzle of Reid's revolver leapt towards him.

"My God . . . don't shoot!" screamed "Soapy". The hammer of the revolver snapped. The reports of the firearms blended. Mortally wounded, Reid fired again as he crashed to the ground. But "Soapy" Smith had reached the end of the trail. As Reid's bullet found his heart his eyes widened in surprise, his knees buckled and he pitched forward upon the dock.

Next moment a shouting mob of frenzied men were milling madly about the spot. Reid, unconscious, was hurried to the hospital.

Along the Broadway "Soapy" had stalked so confidently but a few short minutes before sped mackinaw-clad miners. "'Soapy's' dead! 'Soapy's' killed!" The curt cry echoed back from the square-fronted stores and betinselled dance-halls. Then hell itself tore loose in the frontier town of Skagway.

Led by the Committee of One Hundred and One as they spilled from the Juneau Wharf, waving rifles and revolvers, wrathful citizens pounced upon the resorts of "Soapy's" gangsters. Like cornered rats, hoodlums, touts and con-men cringed within the honky-tonks, saloons and dance-halls, all thoughts of resistance forgotten as, with the sullen roar of an angry sea, the mob bore down upon them with shouts and cries of vengeance. Leaderless, they scattered for their lives. Here, there and everywhere were wild-eyed, running men, pursued by armed Vigilantes. Into the mountains; skulking in shadowed spots; beneath the beds of harlots; along the river-front and among the rocks and gulches, they vainly sought refuge from the

inexorable wrath of the avengers. Saloons and honky-tonks were smashed and raided. Armed thugs, con-men, touts and thieves were slugged unmercifully, bound and pushed through the streets till nearly fifty ferrety-eyed men swore and cursed behind locked bars while the mob sought ropes to make short shrift of them in one grand necktie-party.

From the direction of Dyea came the sound of marching feet as huge bonfires sent forked tongues of flame leaping skywards and an uncontrollable mob prepared to batter in the jail doors. Only in the nick of time did Captain Yeatman deploy his United States Infantry around the wooden jail to prevent the mass slaughter of "Soapy's" henchmen.

"Citizens of Skagway," he shouted sternly, "this has gone far enough. We don't want murder on our hands. If you don't disperse I'll read the Riot Act. If you attempt to rush this jail you will do so at the peril of your lives!"

Shouting and cursing, the mob broke slowly up to continue their manhunt elsewhere. Next morning the work of mopping up continued without abatement. Squads of Vigilantes tracked down cowering members of the "Soapy" gang with merciless ferocity, closed saloons and dance-halls, smashing mirrors, bottles and tinsel ornaments as they did so. Caught in the net, the thief who had stolen Stewart's poke was forced to return to the delighted Scot the cause of all the trouble.

All night, while the crazed hunt for his henchmen went on, the body of the deposed King of Vice lay, spurned, where it had fallen. Not until the sun rose in a riot of scarlet above the jagged mountain tops did a lone widow he'd once befriended seek out the body of the man who had helped her and see that it was carried to the hospital.

Under armed Vigilantes all prisoners against whom there was no immediate evidence for conviction were paraded past jeering crowds and thrown roughly aboard the *Tartar*. In vain they growled their protests. The Vigilantes knew no mercy. And, as a final precaution, each of the gang was warned that his reappearance in Skagway would be the signal for a prompt and well-attended necktie-party. Skagway's days of misrule were over.

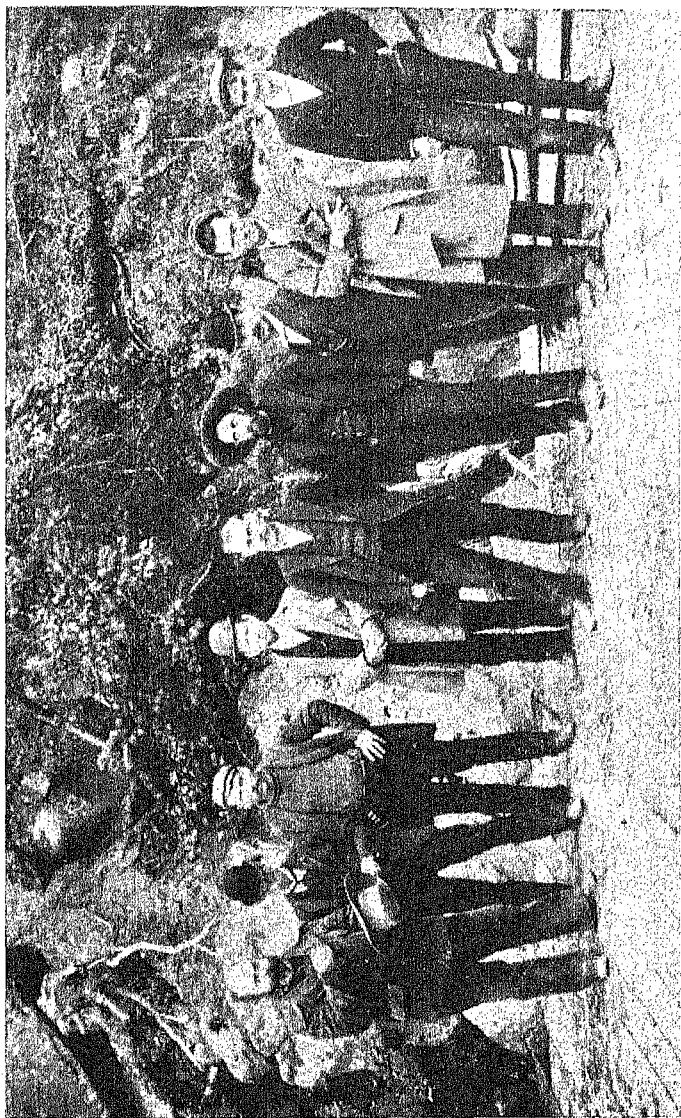
Escaping to the Yukon, some of the gang attempted to re-form at Whitehorse, planning to overthrow the Mounted Police, rob the banks, and establish a republic. But the half-hatched conspiracy was discovered by Superintendent A. F. Snyder of the Force, incriminating papers and the white horse seal of the

revolutionaries were seized in a barn, and the members lost little time in scuttling to other and more healthy climes.

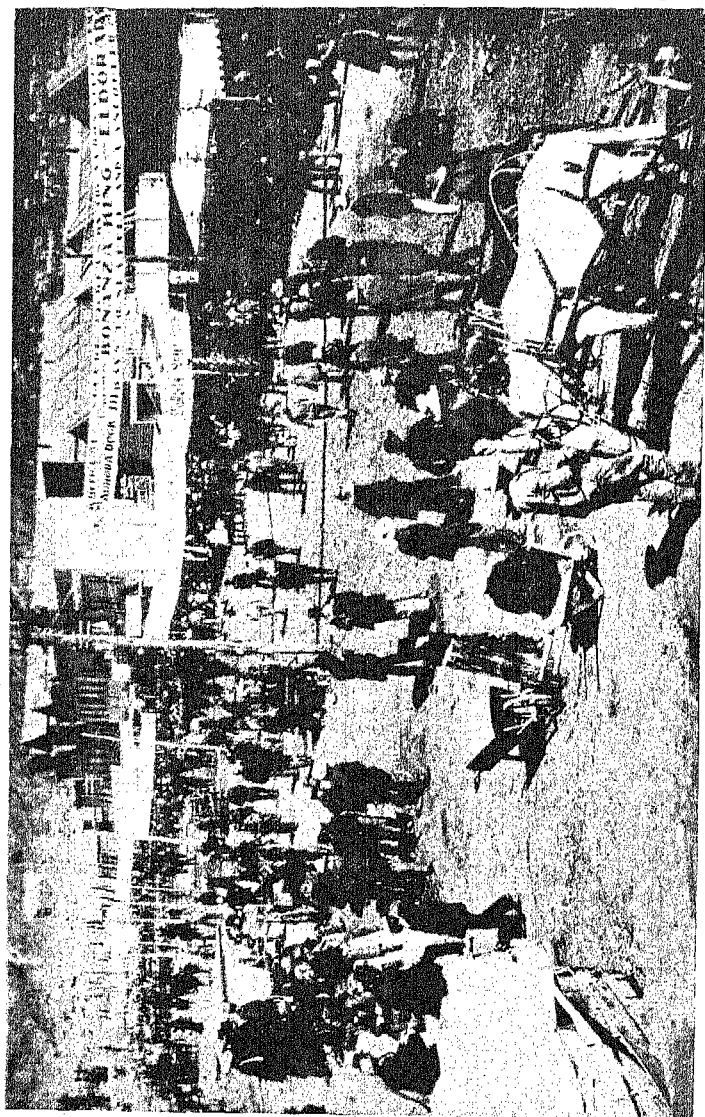
In the presence of an enormous crowd "Soapy" Smith was buried near the church he had helped to establish with the ill-gotten gains of his gang, and for some days an insulting phrase, penned on a card and placed in a cleft stick, was all that marked his grave.

After lingering for twelve days Frank Reid passed away, to be buried but a few short yards from the man whose Nemesis he'd proven.

For a while naught but a wooden marker and a huge representation of a human skull carved on a towering rock as a grisly warning, marked the resting-place of the man who once had been the Lord of Skagway. To-day a small stone, encased in wire netting to prevent it being chipped by souvenir-hunting tourists, marks "Soapy's" grave. And, towering above it—casting its shadow over it when the sun rides high in the northern sky—stands the beautiful monument erected by the citizens of Skagway to honour the memory of City Engineer Frank H. Reid, who gave his life to end the criminal rule of "Soapy" and his hirelings.



THE "SOAPY" SMITH GANG — "SOAPY" FOURTH FROM LEFT



DAWSON AT THE TIME OF THE GOLD BOOM

CHAPTER III

THE MYSTERY OF THE PORK TRAIL

DESPITE the remarkable control a handful of Mounted Police had succeeded in exercising over the motley hordes that spilled across the Alaskan border into the Yukon, it was inevitable that they should be faced at times with a number of difficult and disturbing crimes. While Skagway had been in the throes of disorder, and "Soapy" Smith and his hoodlums reduced a city and its surroundings to a state of anarchy, the men of the Mounted had been signally successful in enforcing the law around the gold camps of the Yukon. But within eighteen months of the cleaning up of Skagway the red-coated Force found themselves faced with a problem destined to try their metal to the utmost.

Like most cases of its kind it arose from small, and apparently trivial, beginnings and Corporal Ryan little thought as he invited Ole Olsen, the lineman, to drop into his detachment at Hootchiku and share his Christmas dinner, of the tragic events that were to follow in the wake of that friendly invitation.

With the fat Canada goose sizzling appetizingly in the oven, the Corporal jerked open the door for the third time that Christmas night and gazed impatiently across the moon-drenched surface of the Yukon. But his long searching gaze failed to reveal any dark figure moving against the violet-tinted snow-drifts. Instead he gazed on a magnificent world of silver and violet and black shadows, with just a tinge of fiery red lingering above the distant line of purple pines.

"Never knew Ole to let a fellow down like this before," he growled impatiently as he slammed the door and basted the goose again. "Guess he's run into a bunch at Fussell's roadhouse and the boys are whooping it up." He shook his head resignedly at the thought of eating his Christmas dinner alone.

It was the closing week of 1899. At the tented city of Dawson, fifty odd miles to the northward, sixty thousand miners were blasting the frozen creek beds in their frantic search for gold. Many a fortune had already been panned by hard-boiled old sourdoughs, while even the *cheechakos* were hoofing it along that long,

lonely four hundred mile trail to the great Outside with sizable pokes of gold or fat wads of bank-notes.

The memory of "Soapy" Smith, and the fleecing of gold-burdened miners, was still fresh in the minds of those who trod the northern trails. And, to prevent a repetition of such scenes as he had witnessed around Skagway, Superintendent Sam B. Steele had increased the strength of the Force with which he ruled the Yukon. Now ten officers and some two hundred and thirty-four scarlet-coated men patrolled the silent reaches, collected customs dues, blazed new trails and made their power felt from the oval lodges of coppery Kutchins to the dance-halls and honky-tonks of Dawson. And to further ensure the safety of those travelling along the frozen highway to Alaska and the Outside, the resourceful Sam Steele had scattered lone detachments here and there along the route.

There was Fort Selkirk, one hundred and seventy miles south of Dawson; then Minto, eighteen miles farther on; then Hootchiku, sixteen miles beyond, and, at an equal distance, Five Fingers, and so the chain of Police posts continued right on to the Alaskan border. It made a man packing thousands of dollars of yellow gold dust feel safer to realize that the trail was under the hawk-like vigilance of these Mounted Police, for without them one would be entirely at the mercy of the desperadoes and human vultures who, despite all attempts to keep them out, had found their way into the gold camps.

As a further means of keeping in closer touch, the Mounted Police had just completed a rough frontier telegraph line between Dawson and the Alaskan boundary. It was a rough affair, strung from tree to tree, and Ole Olsen and his fellow linemen along the route were kept continually on the go, freeing the line of fallen trees and other debris that encumbered it after every thaw or blizzard.

Ole did not turn up that Christmas Day. By December 31st he was still missing and Ryan was getting anxious. That Christmas thaw might, of course, have made extra work for him. Still, ten days had elapsed since he had passed through. Restlessly Ryan again glanced over a report he had received from Constable Arthur Pennycuik of Fort Selkirk detachment. It referred to two undesirables named Tom Miller and Charlie Ross who had robbed an ice-locked scow at Hell's Gates and were said to be hiking southward.

Well, it was a cinch they hadn't passed through Hootchiku or

he would have seen and identified them from their descriptions. They must still be somewhere between Hootchiku and Fort Selkirk. Again his thoughts swung to the missing Ole. Could he have met with an accident, he wondered. At last he decided to kill two birds with one stone.

Slipping on his parki he stepped through the door, wormed his moccasined feet into the snowshoe thongs and crunched north over the crusted drifts towards Minto, his eyes alert for signs. The Christmas thaw and subsequent bitter cold had glazed the surface of the snow to the consistency of iron, but there had since been a fall of powdery snow. The going was easy and he slipped rapidly across the waste lands.

At a point where a cut-off led through the woods he hesitated. The "Pork Trail" had been cut by freighters hauling supplies to Dawson to avoid a wide bend in the river, and as the telegraph line followed it Ryan decided to take it, in the hope that it might perhaps furnish some clue to Ole's prolonged and inexplicable absence.

He had covered some nine miles when a slight depression, running at right angles to the trail, caught his eye. It might have been an animal path, but it looked much more like a snowed-in trail made by human feet. Where did it lead? He decided to investigate.

For twenty minutes he walked parallel with the depression, careful not to disturb it, then emitted an ejaculation of surprise. Before him, buried deep in the bush, an abandoned tent arose from a wall of unbarked logs. The absence of animal stretchers told him that it was not a trapper's hangout. Why, then, a tent so far from the beaten track? His eyes took a swift inventory as he stepped within. The bunk was large enough to accommodate two men. Suddenly he tensed. Piled in a corner were sacks and boxes of provisions—and each bore the mark of the trading company whose goods had been pilfered from the frozen-in scow at Hell's Gates. He had stumbled on Miller and Ross's hangout! Quickly he listed the contents of the tent. Then, stepping out into the snow, he made his way thoughtfully back towards the Pork Trail.

A steely darkness had settled upon the ghostly woods and mushroomed pines when he espied at last the long ebony rectangle of Captain Fussell's roadhouse, broken by orange squares of light that shone cheerily on the purple drifts. From the stove-pipe a white column of vapour roared vertically up into the be-

jewelled sky above. From the icy breastplate on his parki Ryan realized it must be nearly sixty below.

Throwing open the door he entered the brown spaciousness of the bunk-house and shook hands with Captain Fussell. Dropping into a babiche-netted chair before the red-hot box-stove he absorbed the welcome heat and listened to the Captain's account of the latest up-river gossip.

"Say, Fussell," Ryan eyed the tall, rawboned figure anxiously, "what happened to Ole Olsen? He was due at my place for dinner on Christmas Day, but hasn't shown up yet."

"What!" Fussell's jaw sagged open in astonishment. "That's damned queer. Ole left here 'fore sun-up Christmas morning. Couldn't keep him. Said you'd be waiting dinner for him."

Ryan's forehead creased in a puzzled frown. "Was he alone?"

"No. Two fellows from Dawson bunked here the night afore, Will Clayson, a fellow from Seattle who'd struck it rich in the creeks, and another guy named Lynn Relfe, caller-off in one o' the dance-halls. They wus on their way Outside with quite a pile. Figgered on spendin' Christmas here only Ole wus so all-fired anxious to keep that date with you they decided to pull out with him. Don't tell me you didn't see them!"

"Neither hide nor hair of any one of them. Think I'll hike back to Five Fingers in the morning. Maybe Sergeant Parker'll know something. Give me a sheet of paper, I want to drop a line to Pennycuik at Fort Selkirk. Guess you can find someone to take it over."

Late the following evening Ryan shook off his snowshoes, entered the low log barracks at Five Fingers and clasped the sinewy hand of Sergeant Parker. Through the frosty air boomed the menacing roar of the nearby rapids, mingling with the companionable crackling of the wood in the red-hot stove. As he exchanged his frosted moccasins and duffle socks for dry ones Ryan gazed anxiously about the white-painted living-room for a sign of the missing Olsen; a glance that wasn't lost on Parker.

"Well, Corporal, what's eating you?" he asked.

"Have you seen Olsen?" Ryan asked abruptly. "He left Fussell's early Christmas morning for my place and seems to have dropped off the edge of the earth. Figured he might be here."

"Haven't seen him since the 21st," Parker answered with obvious surprise. "Constable Buxton came back on the 24th

with all his tools except his pliers and file. Fact is, Ryan, I've been kind of worried myself. It was pretty soft on Christmas Day and I've a hunch he hit a bad spot and went through. This Yukon's treacherous as hell. Solid ice one day, shell ice the next. All depending on the current. Too bad if he got drowned."

Ryan's eyes narrowed. "But don't forget, he was travelling with Relfe and Clayson and . . . between them they were packing a tidy amount of coin. Guess I'll have a bite and hit the hay. I'm meeting Pennycuick on the Pork Trail at noon to-morrow. Got a line-up on that Hell's Gate robbery; located some of the stuff."

With growing fear and apprehension Ryan returned to his detachment at Hootchiku next morning and continued on upon his snowshoes till he came to the fork-off on the Pork Trail. Fresh tracks showed that Pennycuick was there ahead of him. Then, through the frost-rimed willows, he espied the tall angular form of the Englishman near the tent.

"Hello, Ryan," he laughed, "I've just been poking around this tent you found. It's Miller and Ross's hide-out all right. Here—look at these draught holes," he pointed to the stovepipe, "they form a perfect figure eight. Saw those same pipes and stove in Miller's camp at Hell's Gates on December 11th. Three days later, when I returned there with a warrant, they'd vamoosed. Here's something else I found." Reposing upon a rough spruce table were a 40.82 rifle, a bag of cartridges, a pair of pliers and a file.

"Pennycuick," announced Ryan grimly, "those pliers belong to Ole. We've got more than a scow robbery on our hands or I miss my guess. This begins to look like murder."

That night word of the discovery in the tent was flashed to Dawson and Tagish. Promptly the whole Force snapped into action. Every man was on his toes. Alert eyes scrutinized every traveller mushing along that icy trail towards the Alaskan boundary for men answering the description of Miller and his partner.

CHAPTER IV
THE SCARLET AVENGERS

THE following day Staff-Sergeant George M. Graham was gazing through the frosted windows of the Tagish barracks, near the Alaskan boundary, at the most stupid piece of foolhardiness he had witnessed in many a day. A fur-coated man in a low-slung sled was whipping a team of black horses furiously across the river towards a spot where the swift current undercut the ice. For reasons best known to himself the driver had swerved aside from the regular trail which passed the barracks and was making directly for the dangerous ice. Behind him loped a magnificent St. Bernard dog.

"There's one bird who doesn't place much value on his hide," Graham turned to Constable Thomas A. Dickson who was writing at a nearby table. "Better slip over to the stable and grab a rope—we're going to need it in a minute. Look how that ice is sagging! There! I told you. Damn it all—one of his horses is through. Come on. *Quick!*"

Ploughing through the loose snow they saw that one horse was partly submerged while the other animal was thrashing frenziedly about. The driver, a heavy-set, beetle-browed man, was adding to the confusion by flailing the fear-maddened animals mercilessly with his whip.

Snatching the whip from the driver's hand Graham swept him angrily aside. "What's the big idea," he shouted, "abusing these poor dumb beasts? Here, grab this rope and help get 'em on good ice or you'll lose your whole damned outfit."

"All right," growled the Sergeant as they got the team on to safe ice, "I'll take the reins. Here, Dickson, lead that off-horse by the halter. He's nervous as hell."

Reaching the barracks he turned furiously upon the big man. "What in hell possessed you to drive into that mess? Any *cheechako*'d know better." He spat viciously. "What's your name, anyway?"

The stranger leered sideways. "George O'Brien," he mumbled gruffly through his beard.

Graham eyed him coldly. This O'Brien had shown a suspicious anxiety to avoid contact with the Police. A swift, appraising glance had already shown him a Police robe on the sled. How had it come into his possession? Police equipment wasn't bartered promiscuously about the country.

While O'Brien changed his wet clothes Graham questioned him about the robe. Shifty-eyed and sullen, the big man explained that he'd obtained it from the Officer Commanding at Dawson some time before. Then, attired once more in dry clothing, O'Brien sought the entertainment afforded by the notorious Indian Jenny in her cabin not far away.

Graham thoughtfully watched the stocky figure disappear in a world of spinning flakes, then sat down at the table and scribbled a hurried wire to Inspector William Scarth at Dawson.

A few hours later he received a reply. O'Brien's story was correct. Disgustedly he tossed the wire to Dickson. "Guess we can pass O'Brien up. Thought we'd landed a suspect, but Dawson says his story about the robe's O.K. How about a game of poker?"

The game had just commenced when the operator entered with another telegram which caused the Sergeant's lean face to broaden into a smile and sent him ploughing through the storm. Entering the squalid cabin of Indian Jenny without the formality of knocking he met the steely challenge in the eyes of the half-drunken O'Brien. The Sergeant's lips set grimly.

"O'Brien, alias Tom Miller," he snapped, "I arrest you for that scow robbery at Hell's Gates last December. Throw on your coat, and make it snappy. And what happened to Graves—that partner of yours who's been calling himself Ross? Did time with you in Dawson."

"Miller!" O'Brien laughed hoarsely. "Who in hell's Miller? My name's O'Brien. I don't know nothing about your lousy scow."

While O'Brien cursed his head off in the guard-house Graham and Dickson searched his sled. It contained a 30.30 Winchester, a good supply of ammunition, two revolvers, two empty shells for a .41 Winchester revolver and a telescope. On the floor of the sled was a dark stain which might possibly have been made by animal or human blood.

As he re-read the last telegram from Dawson Graham chuckled. His description of O'Brien had clicked there. So closely had it tallied with Miller's, as given in Pennycuick's report,

that Inspector Scarth had wired him on second thoughts to hold him and charge him with the scow theft. A hurried check-up had disclosed that O'Brien and a man named Graves had been released from Dawson jail that fall. O'Brien, destitute of funds, had been given sufficient rations to take him out of town.

Graham pondered. How, then, had he secured sufficient money since to buy a good team and all the other equipment? The Sergeant flashed another wire to Dawson. Scarth replied that he was hurrying south by dog-team, bringing with him Harry McGuire, a former Pinkerton detective.

Meanwhile Pennycuick was continuing his investigations in the vicinity of the Pork Trail. Somewhere in that neighbourhood, he felt convinced, lay the key to the mystery of the missing men. Quiet and unassuming, Pennycuick believed in employing what he termed common sense. And that common sense told him that the Christmas thaw would, as a result of the subsequent cold snap and the glazing of the snow, leave a permanent record of what had happened that day if the actual place of the crime could be located and the soft snow that had since fallen could be removed.

A careful survey disclosed signs of someone having climbed the sloping bank at the point where the tent trail reached the river. Then he noticed something that had previously escaped him. From the river to the tent the branches had been lopped from the trees. But why? Certainly not to clear the trail for they were cut an arm's length overhead.

Turning, he gazed southward through the slashed bush from a hillock behind the tent. The cutting of the branches afforded a perfect view of some ten miles of the frozen Yukon! Now he understood the significance of that telescope found on O'Brien's sled. From this hidden tent a man with a telescope could watch, unseen, anyone following the river trail. To Pennycuick the discovery took on new and alarming significance.

Leaving the knoll he examined some of the fallen trees closely. Each had been cut down with an axe that obviously had three distinct notches in the blade. Following the tent trail back to the river bank Pennycuick swept away the loose snow with some spruce boughs, disclosing a distinct furrow in the crusted snow which could have been made by dragging a body over it while the snow was melting. It led to where there had been a hole in the ice which had later frozen over. Picking up a tuft of yellow hair which might have belonged to O'Brien's St. Bernard he slipped it in his pocket. Then, following the furrow

to the top of the bank, he found himself standing in a small snow-covered clearing ringed with frosted bushes.

Had Clayson, Relfe and Olsen, he wondered, as they swung joyously southward that balmy Christmas morning, without a thought of lurking danger, been enticed from the river and ambushed near this spot? To Detective McGuire, who had replaced Corporal Ryan, he confided his suspicions, then hurried to Fort Selkirk to confer with Inspector Scarth.

Scarth was worried and anxious. Public opinion did not uphold the action of the Mounted Police in arresting George O'Brien, who, arrogant and angry, was demanding his release. Not a shred of direct evidence had yet been produced to justify him being confined. And now the moccasin telegraph had brought word that Clayson and Olsen had followed a rush to a new gold strike on the Big Salmon and were up there working claims. It looked very much as though the whole affair was going to blow up after all. O'Brien couldn't be held indefinitely without direct evidence to connect him either with the robbery or the murder.

When Pennycuick returned to the cut-off on the Pork Trail he brought along O'Brien's big St. Bernard. Unleashing the animal half a mile from the tent trail he put into effect an experiment he had conceived.

"Go home!" he ordered. The St. Bernard wagged his tail, gazed questioningly at him, then lay down on the snow. "Go home!" Again Pennycuick repeated his command.

Slowly the dog arose, surveyed him for a moment, then trotted off. At the junction of the trails he swung north towards the tent. Half an hour later they found him snuggled down within, obviously very much at home!

McGuire laughed understandingly. "Well, Pennycuick, if that doesn't tell its own story I'll eat my hat. O'Brien's up to his neck in this. It's just a case of rounding up the evidence. I don't believe Clayson and Olsen were ever near the Big Salmon. Come along and I'll show you why."

Through the snow-covered spruce they crunched southward to the opening in the woods that Pennycuick had thought a likely place for an ambush. For a considerable distance around McGuire had painstakingly removed the soft snow down to the glazed surface.

Clutching the Constable's arm he pointed. Two dark red splotches stained the surface of the snow. Some distance away were four more ominous stains. Frozen pools of blood!

Pennycuick nodded. "Just as I thought. Those fellows were seen from the tent, lured into an ambush here and murdered. Then their bodies were dragged to the river and shoved through the ice. Guess the killers figured they'd be carried down to the sea, or crushed to pieces at break-up. Still—we've got to get evidence to satisfy a jury, and Yukon juries are hard-boiled. Let's give this clearing the once-over then we'll examine the snow around the tent."

Day after day, in the biting cold of fifty and sixty degrees below zero, they searched the sinister surroundings. On hands and knees they sifted the freezing snow inch by inch through frost-blackened fingers. Gradually, painstakingly, a weight of evidence was unfolded of the utmost significance. A careful examination of every tree disclosed bullet-scarred bark and clipped-off branches. With McGuire's help and his own "common sense", Pennycuick calculated the angles of trajectory and the points from which the shooting had been done. To the mounting pile of evidence were added some splinters of bone, some human hair, a 40.82 shell, a watch that had stopped at 9.02, part of a tooth broken from the root, and part of another gold-filled tooth smeared with the lead of a bullet.

At last they moved back to the tent. Standing at the doorway Pennycuick surveyed the unbroken surface of the snow with a look of keen inquiry.

"Mac," he said, "if you'd done away with anyone, and wished to get rid of any incriminating articles you couldn't burn, what would you do?"

McGuire thought for a moment. "I'd throw 'em away—scatter 'em about."

"Exactly!" Diving his hand into his pocket Pennycuick produced a few coins, a pocket-knife and a key, and with quick jerks sent them spinning across the snow. Then with a stick he marked a semicircle outside the farthest point where they had dropped and picked up the broom. "Come on, Mac, we'll sweep up all the loose snow inside this line and sift it."

Again they went to work. The results surpassed the Constable's rosiest expectations. First they discovered a lineman's leather belt, then a key, an axe with three notches in the blade that corresponded with the cuttings on the trees, a peculiar coin which Relfe was known to have carried as a charm, and finally the charred embers of a fire. Among the ashes were remnants of burned clothing, some buttons bearing the name of a Seattle

clothier, and the eyelets from a pair of factory-made moccasins. Finally, from a shovelful of soft snow, Pennycuick withdrew a ragged scrap of paper and whistled softly. It was Ole Olsen's receipt from Fussell's roadhouse for breakfast—and it was dated Christmas morning!

Things were progressing nicely, yet the most necessary evidence for a murder trial was still lacking. Despite the fact that Scarth had sent out parties to cut and dynamite the river ice and drag the bottom no bodies had been found. O'Brien, resolute and angry, was still demanding his release while muttering miners were growing increasingly sympathetic towards the prisoner.

At last, with a thunderous roar, the Yukon cast aside its icy fetters. Millions of tons of ice, as though imbued with life, reared and leapt, submerged and rose again to go plunging on towards the sea. There seemed little hope of finding any frail human bodies after that terrific force had expended itself. Nevertheless, Mounted Police patrols pushed out in canoes as soon as the jam had gone out and commenced a systematic search of sloughs and sandbars.

On the 30th of May the citizens of Dawson were electrified with the news that a bullet-riddled body, identified as Clayson's, had been found on a sandbar near Fort Selkirk.

On June 11th another body was found floating down-river in the vest pocket of which were sodden visiting-cards bearing the name Lynn Relfe. Sixteen days later the entire Yukon was brought to a still higher pitch of tension and excitement by the discovery of Ole Olsen's body on a sandbar. Each body was riddled with three or four bullets, proving that the shooting had been wild, while Olsen's skull had been crushed in. Packed in ice, the bodies were shipped to Dawson, where it was found that the two broken teeth discovered near the tent trail exactly fitted roots in the gums of Relfe and Clayson.

On the sweltering day of June 10th, nearly a year later, O'Brien's trial opened in the log courthouse at Dawson. From the dock the prisoner, self-possessed and aggressive, glowered down upon the crowd of flannel-shirted miners, sleek dark-coated gamblers and flashy ladies from the honky-tonks. Grimly a jury of miners and merchants awaited the testimony of eighty witnesses it had taken eighteen months to assemble from all parts of the continent. The Yukon was on its toes to hear the whole story of the killings. Upon a table were piled exhibits which

almost exhausted the alphabet, including tree stumps showing three notches, the notched axe itself, analyst's reports on the stains found in the snow and on the floor of O'Brien's sled, two broken teeth smeared with the lead of bullets, and the key found near the tent which had been found to fit Clayson's safe in Seattle.

Slowly the story was unfolded. O'Brien and Graves had met in the Dawson jail. O'Brien had first propositioned a fellow named Williams, then Sutton, with the suggestion that when released they camp at some isolated spot, watch for gold-burdened miners mushing south, throw a gun on them, take their gold and notes and push their bodies through the ice. The swift current of the Yukon would do the rest. Both had received the proposition coldly, but Graves, of weaker fibre, had later succumbed to the hypnotism of O'Brien's keen grey eyes and wily tongue.

Their time up, the Police had furnished them with an axe, a stove and some provisions. On December 12th O'Brien and Graves had stopped at Fussell's roadhouse. On the 16th O'Brien, with his St. Bernard, had stood guard while Graves carried their purloined supplies from the Arctic Express Company's cabin into the bush; then both had disappeared. On December 26th Fussell had observed smoke rising in silvery clouds above the tree-tops in the direction in which the tent was subsequently located—and wondered. On the 27th O'Brien had emerged unexpectedly from the willows fringing the Pork Trail and followed a Mr. and Mrs. Prater south along the river trail towards Tagish. One night he'd been seen counting a large roll of greenbacks. On another night he'd displayed a peculiar gold nugget—the corners bent over almost like fingers clasping a small nugget within—which had formerly belonged to Relfe.

Breathlessly the crowd listened as Pennycuick and McGuire filled in the details of what had happened on that tragic Christmas Day.

Between December 17th and the 24th Graves and O'Brien had packed the stolen supplies to their rendezvous in the woods, cleared an aisle through the forest with the notched axe and prepared the death-trap. Through the telescope they'd watched three travellers moving southward along the ice that Christmas morning. With relentless determination they'd hurried down the tent trail and prepared their ambush. Below the bank they could hear the men talking and laughing as they swung along.

Suddenly Graves had appeared on the ice with his 40.82 in

his hands. Frightened, the men had scrambled up the bank and dug for cover, only to be met with a fusillade of shots from O'Brien's 30.30. Confused by the unexpectedness of the attack the men had milled around. O'Brien and Graves were shooting wildly. Clayson dropped sixteen feet from the bank. Lynn Relfe sprang for cover; a bullet tore through his cheek, clipping out a gold-filled tooth, another found his brain. Olsen, wounded, made for the woods, to be overtaken and bludgeoned to death.

Coats were stripped from the bodies and thoroughly searched. A hole was cut in the ice and the victims consigned to the chilly clutches of the Yukon. Having obliterated, as they thought, all signs of the struggle, O'Brien and Graves had kindled a fire outside the tent and attempted to destroy the remaining evidence.

Painstakingly Prosecuting Attorney F. C. Wade, Q.C., wove one piece of evidence into another, cementing them with the exhibits. It was the ninth day of the trial and O'Brien, stolid up to this time, gazed with lowering face and downcast mien about him. Even the stain on the sleigh had been analysed as human blood. Sergeant Graham testified to finding two one-hundred dollar bills sewn into the soles of O'Brien's boots and an additional two thousand dollars secreted between the runners and the iron shoeing of the sled taken from him at Tagish.

In a brilliant defence Donahue attempted to sweep aside the evidence as purely circumstantial. Something more than flimsy allegations were necessary when a man's life was at stake, he thundered. Wade was on his feet in an instant.

"Your Honour, permit me to produce Quartermaster-Sergeant Telford."

The red-coated sergeant entered the witness-box amid a stir. The prosecuting attorney passed the notched axe over. "Sergeant, do you recognize this axe?"

"Yes, sir," replied the witness. "When O'Brien's time was up I returned his sled, dog, tent and revolver, but couldn't find an axe, so I gave him this one with a sort of apology for them three nicks. I'd know it anywhere."

The last witness, extradited from Seattle where he had been serving a term of imprisonment, was known as the "Clear Kid" around the Dawson dance-halls, his actual name being West.

In a peculiar medley of Bowery jargon and Northern slang ex-Faro dealer West told of occupying the cell behind O'Brien the previous winter and of being approached by him to waylay, kill

and rob passing miners, " to clean up a bunch o' coin ", and then to " chuck their bodies in the drink ". Preferring petty larceny to murder he'd refused, gone his own way and promptly landed in jail again.

At dawn on the morning of August 23rd, 1901, O'Brien mounted the scaffold in the barracks yard at Dawson. Swaggering and unrepentant he dropped to his doom, cursing with his last breath Pennycuick, McGuire and the red-coated Force that had proved his Nemesis. Graves, alias Ross, was never seen again. But late that summer a decomposed and bullet-riddled body was found on a sandbar far down the Yukon River, and to this day old sourdoughs will tell you that O'Brien, after the murders, shot his partner and pushed him through the ice to dispose of the only living testimony to his guilt.

CHAPTER V
THREE MEN IN A BOAT

ON the hot afternoon of July 15th, 1902, just ten months after the Mounted Police had written *finis* to O'Brien's career, Constable "Tiny" Burns entered the swinging doors of the Exchange Saloon, pushed his two hundred pounds of genial personality through the throng of flannel-shirted miners and straw-haired dance-hall girls and leaned against the polished bar. The white-coated bar-tender smiled as he gazed into "Tiny's" bland eyes of china blue and set them up. For, despite the fact that he sported the scarlet tunic and glittering buttons of the Mounted Police, "Tiny" was as popular as any man in Dawson.

"Better watch your step, Pete," he warned. "Two more complaints to-day. These girls'll have to quit rolling the pokes or it's going to be too bad for you. Yukon Council's getting sore. Talking of taking away all liquor licences. . . ."

Pete nodded and passed the bottle of Johnny Dewar across the counter. "Pour yourself another," he invited. "By the way, Siwash Joe was in here a little while ago, whooping it up. Says he saw what looked like a body floating in the water about twenty miles up-river."

"He did, eh?" Tiny tensed, then, swinging upon his heel, he strode rapidly towards the Town Station to acquaint Inspector Routledge with the news. But Constable Cudlip from Indian River had already reported the matter, and Corporal Piper and Inspector Howard were preparing to leave on an up-river steamer to investigate.

A few hours later they came upon the body of a middle-aged man stranded in a slough in one of the Yukon's backwaters. Except for an elastic-sided Concord boot on one foot, and a pair of overalls, the body was destitute of clothing. Examination disclosed two ominous features: the skin of the underarm appeared to have been seared, while, at the base of the skull, was a mark that looked suspiciously like a bullet wound.

"Murder!" snapped Piper succinctly. "Must've been shot while he was dressing. That's why the overalls only cover one

leg." With his jack-knife he extracted a few hobnails from the boot, slipped them in his pocket and turned his attention to the overalls. His search was rewarded with a key-ring from which depended a bunch of keys and a battered metal tag bearing the inscription:

uthilette,
ughton,
P.Q.

Obviously the dead man was a French-Canadian, and from the Province of Quebec.

Next morning a coroner's jury reached a quick and unanimous verdict: Murder by a person, or persons, unknown, and Piper strode into the Mess Room. "O.C. wants to see you right away," he told Burns.

Slamming on his broad-brimmed Stetson Tiny hurried to the office, where he found Inspector Routledge standing beside a rough spruce table, his sun-tanned face wrinkled in a frown of perplexity. For a moment the tall, military-looking man gazed thoughtfully into the eyes of Burns.

"You signed on in Quebec, didn't you, Constable?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Speak French, of course?"

Burns nodded.

"All right—you're just the man I want. I'm going to assign you to this case. Here," he handed him the key-ring, "is all the evidence we have. This fellow seems to have come from Broughton, Quebec, but we can only guess his name since the first letters are obliterated. I've written the priest there to see if he can link the names of any of his parishioners with the letters on this tag. Better do the honky-tonks and dance-halls before you go up the creeks."

"Yes, sir. I'll mix around and see what I can find. These French-Canadians hobnob mostly with those who speak their lingo." Saluting, he departed.

Although it was four years since the historic trail of '98 had lured its motley hordes to the Yukon's gold-burdened creeks, a steady stream of humanity still continued to invade this land of promise. And the Call of the Wild had not been lost on the hardy, fun-loving, adventurous descendants of the old *coureurs de bois* who had laid the foundations of the West. From every village in old Quebec swarthy sons of the soil set forth to join the

north-bound Argonauts. Sailing by steamer from Seattle they boarded the narrow-gauge White Pass and Yukon train at Skagway, rattled into Whitehorse and continued on down the serpentine reaches of the Lewes and Yukon rivers in their search for vacant claims.

The tented city of Dawson had emerged from its chrysalis into a bustling city boasting a population of nearly thirty thousand, with an additional twenty thousand or so scattered along the creeks, and Burns realized as he hurried over to the Guard Room that he had no light task before him. In the complex O'Brien case the identity of the victims had been known from the very first. Here, however, nothing was known save that a man with a battered key-ring had met a violent end somewhere between Dawson and a point that might be two hundred and fifty miles up-river.

During the next few days Burns combed every likely spot from the lowest dives in the red light district to the most imposing dance-halls without finding a trace of a Frenchman from the vicinity of Broughton, or anyone familiar with a name resembling the letters on the tag.

From the blatant, roistering city of Dawson he turned to the creeks with their crowds of high-booted miners toiling and sweating in the tropic heat of a sun that never slept, sluicing the gravel and water through wooden troughs to trap the glittering particles of yellow metal. On Bonanza Creek he obtained his first promising bit of information when grey-bearded Joe Laffleur told of knowing a Bouthillette family in Quebec. Old Bouthillette, said the miner, had raised a large family, mostly boys, but had passed to his reward these many years.

Returning to Dawson Burns beached his canoe beside the Aurora Dock, and, elbowing his way through the noisy crowd of over-dressed women and slouch-hatted men assembled to meet the steamer, he made his way to the Town Station to find that both Inspector Routledge and Bombardier Smith, the Corporal in charge, were down at the steamboat landing.

As he waited he reviewed with misgiving the various aspects of the case. But his thoughts were swept into more optimistic channels when Routledge returned with word that the parish priest at Broughton had written that a Leon Bouthillette had sold out his carpenter's shop there in May and, on June 4th, had left to make his fortune in the Yukon. A middle-aged man, and a widower of good reputation, he'd taken all his money with him,

approximately five hundred dollars.

Proceeding to the offices of the White Pass Navigation Company Burns checked up on all Purser's lists of passenger sailings with results that were bitterly disappointing. No passenger by the name of Bouthilette had travelled on any of the sternwheelers.

Turning again to the dance-halls he picked up a promising clue. Five Frenchmen had left Whitehorse by canoe about the time Bouthilette would have arrived there. Donning plain clothes Tiny boarded the *Eldorado* for Whitehorse. The decks were crowded with bronzed miners who had made their stake along the creeks and with others who cursed this Land of Cain and were going Outside with little more than the clothes they stood in. There were shrill-voiced prostitutes and haughty ladies of the dance-halls who'd acquired respectability and a lofty contempt for their fallen sisters with their gold. There were scarlet-coated Mounties busy checking gold shipments and collecting the hated Export Tax, and sleek black-coated men who, despite the notices prohibiting gambling, shuffled the cards incessantly.

Past old Fort Selkirk, past Minto, up the Five Finger Rapids and across Lac Labarge the steamer chugged her toilsome way through the tropical heat of the Arctic summer until the grey-walled canyon and tumbling waters of Whitehorse Rapids loomed ahead.

The information Burns obtained at Whitehorse led him to the conclusion that he was following the right trail at last. Tracing the progress of the canoe containing the five men from place to place along the river, his elation was turned to disappointment at the end of a week of gruelling toil. The entire party was located. All of them were working in a wood camp near the mouth of the Big Salmon, and not one of them had ever heard of Bouthilette.

Burns swore wholeheartedly and with conviction. Seven valuable days wasted in following a false lead. He recalled how the boys had chuckled when he'd assumed the role of detective. And he was compelled to admit to himself that his round, genial countenance, his comparatively short frame and expansive girth, and his cheerful outlook upon life didn't quite accord with the accepted picture of a sleuth. Yet he had a deep-seated hunch that he would eventually break the case wide open. And those hunches rarely let him down.

Still convinced that Bouthilette had come down-river in a small boat, and had probably fallen victim to other members of

the party, Burns proceeded back to Whitehorse, hoping to obtain enlightenment from the boat register that was kept there as the result of an edict issued by Major Steele to the effect that: "All barges, rowboats and canoes leaving the waters above Tagish will be numbered and registered in a book."

Word awaited him at the barracks that the priest at Broughton had received a letter from Bouthilette. It was dated Vancouver, June 11th, and in it he told of having met two French-Canadians aboard the train, with whom he was embarking for Skagway.

At Vancouver Detective W. H. Welsh had, under instructions from Dawson, investigated all lists of passengers sailing northward on and after that date. His report stated that Leon Bouthilette had sailed for Skagway aboard the S.S. *Amur* with two French-Canadians, Guy Beaudoin, an active young man, dark and fairly tall, and Alphonse Constantine, a powerfully-built man of middle-age.

With something more definite to work on, Burns proceeded systematically to search the list of small boats that had left Whitehorse. One by one he turned over the pages. Suddenly there leapt from the faint blue lines three names to be limned in crimson on his brain: Bouthilette, Beaudoin and Constantine! There were two more names: LaForest and Ladouceur. The party had left there on June 16th in a model boat upon which had been painted in black the Police register number 3744. The chances were that the boat had been built right there in Whitehorse.

On the heels of this discovery came the news that another body, apparently that of Guy Beaudoin, had been found at Ogilvie, some twenty-five miles from Indian River where Bouthilette's remains had been located. The feet and arms had been trussed with a length of codline similar to that used by the Indians for tracking their canoes up swift water. The head had been almost blown off before the body had been consigned to the river, with a rock attached to make it sink.

This unexpected news altered Burns' outlook on the case completely. At first he'd ascribed the murder of Bouthilette to a quarrel among the men. But in the light of this new discovery the entire picture took on a new and sinister significance. Instantly Burns' mind flashed back to the brutal O'Brien murders. Was there another monster in human form preying on the unwary along the silent reaches of the Yukon?

Yet, what could the murderer have expected to gain by these

killings since none of the Bouthillette party could have carried much of value? Murders, when they occurred, were usually for personal gain and when the victim was on his way Outside with his accumulated store of gold.

With two of the party murdered, what of Constantine? Might he not also have been slain? For a brief moment, as he recalled the tracking line, Burns thought of Indians then he dismissed the idea for, while the Chilcats had killed five whites near Dalton Post less than two years before, they had since displayed a wholesome fear of the red-coats. It would be well, he concluded, to ascertain more about these other two fellows, Ladouceur and LaForest. If he could but find the man who had built, or sold, boat 3744 he might pick up some valuable information.

Putting his thoughts into action Burns made his way through the scattered settlement and searched the river bank. He questioned several carpenters and boat-builders, but they could give no information. At last, through the pines, came the smell of freshly sawn lumber and the sound of hammers and whipsaws. Next moment he strode into a small shipyard facing the tumultuous Lewes River.

Defeated in his object of finding gold and nuggets, Jim Cleveland was acquiring it by turning his hand to his original craft of boat-building. Taking his corn-cob from his mouth he responded readily to the Mountie's affable inquiry as to how everything was going.

"Business has been pretty good," he admitted. "Quite a lot of these *cheechakos* are bunching together and buying boats. Guess they find it cheaper to float down-river than pay through the nose to travel on the steamers. And," he grinned shrewdly, "there are others who ain't above trying to beat the Export Tax by sneaking through on small boats."

Burns laughed good-naturedly. "Don't we know it! That's why the Assistant Commissioner's tightened up the river watch. Didn't happen, by any chance, to sell a boat to a bunch of Frenchies about a month ago, did you?"

From beneath a pair of shaggy brows Cleveland's grey eyes searched him knowingly. "Come to think of it I believe I did. Let's take a walk over to the shack. Maybe I've got 'em listed in my book."

Over at the rough tarpaper-covered office the boat-builder's gnarled forefinger ran down the pencilled entries. "Here," he

exclaimed, but the Constable shook his head. Cleveland's finger slipped down further until it rested against the date of June 14th. The names of Ladouceur and Pete Forest appeared opposite, with an entry signifying they'd bought a model boat.

Cleveland remembered them well since one of them had insisted on some changes in the stern. He was of medium height, good-natured, had light hair and a fair moustache, he said.

Forest, his partner, was a swarthy, powerful chap with keen black eyes and a hawk-like nose. "Wouldn't be surprised if he had some bow-and-arrow in him," he suggested.

Aided by these descriptions Burns traced LaForest and Ladouceur to a Chinese café where they had bunked from June 12th till the morning of the 16th. A round of the stores and trading posts afforded little additional information since many strangers were continually passing to and fro.

It was from a trader named Paul Rooke that he obtained his next break. Rooke's memory was also good. He recalled both men distinctly since Ladouceur had bought a 45.90 rifle from him—the only one of that calibre he had in stock. Next day he'd come across them at the station when he met the daily train from Skagway. They had met a party off the train and, later, the five of them, all French-Canadians, had dropped into his store to get some grub to take down-river with them. He'd never seen or heard of them again.

Embarking in a canoe, Burns proceeded to trace the journey of boat 3744 down-river. The progress of the party seemed to have been orderly and slow. The boat was registered at Five Fingers, with its full complement aboard; again at McKays, at Minto, and at various outposts of the river watch.

At last he reached Fort Selkirk and dropped in to see a Swedish couple who ran a combination store and bunk-house. Mrs. Neilson was baking bread. Genial as ever, Burns engaged her in friendly conversation, bringing it around to the party he was trailing. There were five of them, she recalled. They'd purchased salt pork, beans and bread and continued on their way, apparently in the best of humour.

Burns was conscious of a feeling of growing disappointment as Mrs. Neilson hurried back to the kitchen. Tucking his purchases under his arm he made his way down the steep bank towards the waiting canoe. Somehow he didn't feel quite satisfied. For a moment he halted in indecision. Then some hunch caused him to swing around and retrace his steps to the store. Hot and

perspiring, Mrs. Neilson faced him. Burns was grinning.

"Faith, Mrs. Neilson, I almost forgot my tobacco. Give me a couple of plugs of T. & B." His eyes roved over the shelves. "So," he reached for the tobacco, "you say you remember that party of Frenchies that passed here about a month ago?"

"Why shouldn't I," she countered, "seeing as how I'd met that good-looking one, Ed LaBelle, before. Met him up on Hunker Creek two years ago. Knew me right away. Nice polite feller he is, too."

On Burns the effect of the name was electrical. Here was one of the party travelling under an alias. Deftly he extracted a description of LaBelle to discover that it coincided in every particular with Cleveland's and Rooke's description of Ladouceur. So Ladouceur and LaBelle were one and the same man! That, under the circumstances, was highly significant, and implied criminal intentions or a criminal record of some kind. Hastily he returned to the canoe, ordered Constable Egan to continue tracing boat 3744 and made immediate tracks for Dawson.

Once again Burns plunged into the seething, shifting underworld, mingling freely with the French-Canadian and half-breed element, now with a definite object in view—the tracing of Ed LaBelle. If money had been the cause of these murders it would have been spent in the dance-halls or around the cribs of the red light district. The romantic streak in the wandering French-Canadian is still apt to throw him in the arms of some light-o'-love, and these vampires, he knew, were notoriously free and open in their talk.

Inspector Routledge had chosen well when he assigned to Constable Burns the work of tracking down the murderer of Bouthillette. For beneath that free and disarming friendliness which made it easy for him to acquire information lay shrewdness and dogged determination.

Within a few days Burns was definitely upon the trail of Ed LaBelle. The wanted man had been a frequenter of a number of these resorts of illicit love and, while not a particularly free spender, was quite a favourite with the ladies. But this trail also was destined to end in crushing disappointment. Ed LaBelle had gone Outside, forsaking Dawson for good. His identity would be buried among the teeming millions surging to and fro along the Pacific coast.

Though convinced that LaForest had accompanied LaBelle Outside Burns continued his search for him, his hopes reviving

when he learned from a bar-tender that he'd seen the hawk-faced Frenchman only a couple of days before, which indicated that he must still be in the vicinity of Dawson. While plainclothes men watched the gangways of the river steamers the Constable continued his search only to find the man's trail as deviating as it was confusing since it was continually being crossed by that of another named Black Fournier.

A tip-off sent him to the log cabin of the pretty *demi-mondaine*, Babe Courteau, which echoed to the sound of song and noisy revelry. Disguised in black felt hat and the habiliments of the creeks, he knocked. The door flew open and a dark-haired girl, her seductive curves exaggerated by a tight-fitting dress of flaming scarlet, smiled a taunting invitation.

Burns blinked as he entered, the thick acrid fumes of *perique* and the pungent odour of alcohol stinging his eyes and nostrils. The place, with its cheap and gaudy hangings, echoed to the full-throated talk of a quartette of Frenchmen engaged in a game of poker and the shrill laughter of comely girls. Suddenly he found himself gazing into the insolent eyes and dark sardonic visage of a tall, swaggering Frenchman who had arisen from the table and lurched aggressively across the room.

"Ho! 'Ave a drink, my frien'." A large hairy fist held a bottle of high wine beneath his nose. "You look for Black Fournier, eh?" The dark eyes leered into his own. "*Voilà*, Monsieur Burns, you look at Black Fournier *right* now. He's run 'way from no man. Marie—geeve ma frien' a glass."

A pregnant and ominous silence had fallen on the group. Their rouged lips parted, the girls watched, wide-eyed and expectant. Evidently the man called Black Fournier bore a reputation for being somewhat tough. Thrusting a glass into the policeman's hand a half-breed girl scurried back to the breathless group across the room.

Casually Burns poured himself a drink. Suspicion had crystallized into the certainty that LaForest and Fournier were one and the same man. That hawk-like face, those flashing black eyes, the swaggering manner—all fitted perfectly with Cleveland's description of Forest.

Burns gazed into the bold eyes of the intoxicated Frenchman and raised his glass. "Well," he laughed, "here's looking at you —*Pete LaForest!*"

CHAPTER VI
THE TRAILING OF LABELLE

FOR a brief second Fournier's eyes seemed to dilate and burn with a lambent flame of hatred. With a crash his glass shattered to fragments on the floor. Next moment he'd thrown back his head and was roaring to Marie to bring another glass. In an instant he'd regained his self-possession.

"LaForest?" he laughed throatily. "So, it is Pete LaForest you want, *messieur*. But you are too late, *ma frien'*. He's gone Outside, maybe two, t'ree weeks ago with Ed LaBelle."

Burns drained his drink, slid his glass across the oilcloth-covered table and turned towards the door. "*Merci, mon ami*," he laughed, "I just had a hunch you might know where he was. So-long, girls."

Within an hour two shadowy figures hovered unobtrusively in the vicinity of the Babe Courteau cabin, and from that moment Black Fournier, though unaware of the fact, was never free from the surveillance of their prying eyes.

Things now commenced to move more rapidly. Constable Egan discovered boat 3744 near Klondyke City and brought it across to Dawson. But a close scrutiny failed to disclose any signs of bloodstains or the slightest evidence of foul play. The bowline proved, however, identical with the cord used to truss up the body of Guy Beaudoin. Burns wired to Superintendent Snyder at Whitehorse, asking him to send Cleveland and Rooke to Dawson to identify Fournier and the boat.

Unconscious of the net that was slowly but remorselessly enmeshing him, Black Fournier was reported by those tailing him to be drinking heavily, gambling and accompanying different girls to the dance-halls.

While Police parties dragged the river in the hope of finding Constantine's body, Burns unearthed more evidence. First he contacted a Charlie Mack whom Ladouceur and LaForest had met at Whitehorse and undertaken to convey down-river in their boat, only to take the Bouthillette party instead. Mack had passed the party of five on their way down-stream and bitter

words had passed between them. Then Burns came across a man named Merryman who had been accorded similar treatment.

Within an hour of his arrival with Rooke at Dawson Cleveland identified boat 3744 as the one he had sold LaForest and Ladouceur, then accompanied Burns to a dance-hall. The place was crowded with the usual bacchanalian throng and their entry passed unnoticed by the scantily-gowned women and the flannel-shirted men who piloted them unsteadily around the floor to the blaring strains of the orchestra.

Elbowing his way to the bar Burns spoke quietly to the white-coated man behind it. The bar-tender nodded, and they pushed their way to the front of the crowd of onlookers. Suddenly Burns whispered to his companion. His arms round a girl in a low-cut evening gown, a tall, broad-shouldered man with dark Indian-like features was moving down the floor. It was Black Fournier.

"Ever see that bird before?"

Cleveland started. "Sure. That's LaForest, the man I sold the boat to."

"Okay!" Burns nodded. "Let's get going."

Two hours later the Constable stood in the shadow of the dance-hall, scrutinizing keenly each one who passed outside. It was after midnight, yet almost as light as day, when a familiar laugh echoed through the doorway and the tall, dark figure of Black Fournier emerged. Burns cannoned into the Frenchman, there was a quick imperceptible movement and the metallic click of handcuffs. An angry roar mingled with a woman's frightened scream. From the lips of Fournier leapt a torrent of blasphemous French as he vainly struggled to disengage himself from the iron clutch of the Mountie's fingers.

"Better come easy, Fournier," snapped Burns, "and tell that jezebel to cut the comedy. I arrest you on suspicion of murder."

Realizing that further resistance was useless Black Fournier gave a disdainful laugh and followed his captor towards the Town Station. At the barracks he threw his head back jauntily and defied them to prove anything against him. With blistering sarcasm he ridiculed the Police. What had they against him, he demanded with cold contempt. *Nom de Dieu . . .* nothing. He'd left the boat near Fort Selkirk, with everyone aboard. If they'd chosen to quarrel later—well, that was no affair of his.

None realized better than Inspector Routledge the ticklish nature of the situation, and how easily the man might yet slip

through their fingers. Assuming that he was guilty, with the organized underworld behind him and the absence of evidence to associate him directly with the killing, it might be a difficult matter to substantiate a charge of murder. Everything depended on the speedy arrest of Ed LaBelle. Again he wired Detective Welsh at Vancouver, urging the necessity for speedy action.

To Detective W. H. Welsh had fallen, perhaps, the most difficult task of all—that of locating and identifying among the surging millions along the Pacific coast the missing LaBelle—a man he had never seen in his life. As he stood beside the Canadian Pacific dock gazing out over the blue waters of Burrard Inlet, waiting for the steamer to disgorge its polyglot load of passengers, his mind was occupied with the latest wire from Dawson. Where was he to begin? Neither at Vancouver nor Seattle did the passenger lists afford him the slightest information. Undoubtedly LaBelle had adopted still another alias. Finally he decided to follow Burns' example and make a thorough search of all places likely to be frequented by the French-Canadian element.

Engaging a number of French half-breeds he turned them loose in the underworlds of Seattle and Vancouver and among the lumber mills along the coast, uncovering one disquieting piece of information. LaBelle had, apparently, been in Spokane on the date of the murder.

In desperation Welsh wired Dawson to send down someone who knew LaBelle by sight. Next day he was relieved to receive a reply from Assistant-Commissioner Wood saying he was sending down Paul Rooke who'd sold LaBelle the rifle.

Still it was very much like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack. Only, in this case, even the haystack was scattered to the four winds of heaven, for the coastal population was continually on the move.

Returning to Seattle Welsh cast around for the trail again. The information that Fournier had been arrested goaded him to superhuman efforts, for now he realized that everything depended upon his success in running down LaBelle.

Rooke had been searching the logging camps with some French-Canadians. Now Welsh transferred him to Seattle, and together they visited places frequented by travellers going to and from the Yukon. And then Fate took a hand, as it often does in the affairs of men. Quite unexpectedly Rooke ran across an old sourdough from the Yukon in the rotunda of an hotel.

As is the way with Northerners, they clasped hands warmly and proceeded to forget the passage of time over a number of congenial drinks. Participating in the talk Welsh learned that their new acquaintance had met LaBelle at Whitehorse on the 5th of August. LaBelle was almost broke and was on his way Outside to look for work either in railroad construction or in some lumber camp. He'd mentioned that he might look up a friend in Missoula, but the man from the Yukon couldn't recall the name.

That night Welsh and Rooke boarded a fast-speeding east-bound train. Already the detective had ascertained that the only extensive railroad construction work was on the Southern Pacific in the vicinity of Butte and Ogden, Montana. They decided to try Missoula first. There, in the role of professional gamblers, they located LaBelle's friend and picked up the trail again. LaBelle was now travelling as Latourneault. His boastfulness and desire to pass as a hard-boiled sourdough had made him sufficiently conspicuous to be remembered. At Butte the trail became hot. LaBelle had left there only ten days before! At Ogden it petered out completely.

Welsh was in a quandary. There was one more bet: Wadsworth, Nevada. From that point work gangs were being distributed by the railroad over quite a large region. Each gang would have to be gone over with a fine toothcomb, and he would have to depend on Rooke to identify the suspect if he happened to be there.

To the railroad officials and construction foreman at Wadsworth Welsh explained the situation, and obtained the promise of their co-operation. Rooke was to pose as timekeeper and check over each of the gangs while Welsh acted as his assistant. This would give them an opportunity to scrutinize closely every man without arousing suspicion. Furnished with credentials to the straw-bosses and foreman of each of the gangs they departed.

There were eight camps in all, with an average of two hundred and fifty men in each; a cosmopolitan aggregation of humanity: ex-jail birds, the off-scourings of the cities and up-standing fellows who'd evidently seen better days. Through the stifling heat of the rusty red box-cars, odoriferous with garlic and the nauseating smell of sweating humanity, they proceeded to check up, Rooke ever on the alert for the familiar features of Ed LaBelle.

A signal had already been arranged. The moment Rooke

lifted his hat and mopped his forehead with a red bandanna handkerchief. Welsh would know that the man he sought stood there before him. But day after day went by until the prospect seemed more and more remote.

Each morning they trudged through the shimmering heat-haze between twin ribbons of blazing steel. Far to the westward the coral-tinted peaks of the Rockies tusked the burnished sky of cobalt. A shrill whistle would echo across the plains and a noisy work-train would go clattering by to feed the voracious appetite of The Pioneer which disgorged steel rails as swiftly as human hands could lay the ties to receive them. The glint of picks and shovels would signify the presence of still another group of sweating, toiling humans whose faces Rooke would search as Welsh checked up their numbers.

With sagging shoulders Rooke proceeded to check up the last of the gangs. Even Welsh had become dejected as there loomed up before him the necessity of retracing his steps and searching for another lead. With dogged persistence he followed Rooke from one tent to another. Just three more tents—yet still no sign. Almost apathetically Welsh watched him enter the last but one. Suddenly the blood raced through his veins. Rooke had dived back into the open and was holding a red bandanna to his head!

"He's right in there," Rooke whispered hoarsely. "On the pay-roll as Jimmie Sloan."

Welsh ducked within. A dozen men lolled on dirty grey blankets. A pleasant-faced chap with a moustache and a crop of dirty blond hair was driving tacks into the sole of a work-boot. Rooke glanced fixedly in his direction and inclined his head.

Welsh's hand leapt forward. "For the love of Mike," he roared effusively. . . . "If it isn't Ed LaBelle! Why, you old sourdough, don't you remember meeting me at Forty Mile?"

Caught unawares, LaBelle leapt to his feet and faced about. His hand shot forward. "By gar," he laughed, "you come from God's countree. . . ." But the smile froze on his lips as, with an almost imperceptible movement, Welsh snapped the handcuffs on his wrists.

The tent was in a turmoil. Hastened by the angry roar of remonstrance Welsh bundled his prisoner outside and piled him aboard the waiting democrat where Rooke sat rigid, the ribbons grasped in nervous hands.

Aroused by the tumult, angry men were spilling from the other tents and box-cars, bent on rescue, waving their fists and cursing. Rooke's lash descended upon the flanks of the team. With a convulsive leap they were in their collars and the democrat raced ahead of the pursuers in a cloud of choking dust. The impossible had happened. After a search covering six States Welsh had uncovered the needle in the haystack!

On the long journey back to the Land of the Midnight Sun, chained together as they slept at night, LaBelle gradually weakened and unfolded the story of what had happened to his captor. Asserting his complete innocence of the killing he bitterly denounced Black Fournier and waived extradition. The Mounted Police had made it tough for Fournier through tightening up on the dance-halls. So he and LaBelle, being short of money, had decided to go Outside.

At Whitehorse Fournier had changed his mind and suggested that they buy a small boat and take parties down-river to Dawson. If the opportunity offered they would rob them. Fournier had a .44 revolver, and for self-protection LaBelle had purchased the 45.90 rifle from Paul Rooke. They had picked up a fellow named Mack, but had abandoned him in favour of the Bouthillette party as it gave promise of better pickings. But the river watch of the Mounted had upset their plans.

On the last night they had pulled into a little island below Stewart. Over a game of cards, before rolling into their blankets, they'd elected Constantine as bull-cook for the following day. As he was washing at the river's edge next morning Fournier had put a bullet through his brain and shot Beaudoin as he came running out of the tent to find out what was wrong. Then he had yanked aside the tent-flap and sent a bullet crashing into Bouthillette's skull. Afterwards Fournier had searched the bodies, placed the spoils—which amounted to a scant two hundred dollars—in a hat and they'd divided it between them.

Some of the clothing they'd kept, and the rest had been consigned to the flames of the camp-fire. Finally Fournier had tied stones to the bodies and committed them to the frigid embrace of the Yukon. Then, being still short of money, they'd made their way back to Dawson.

LaBelle seemed relieved at having unburdened his mind, and gazed quizzically at Welsh as he awaited his reaction. But Welsh was leaning back in his deck-chair contemplating the mighty vista of eternal glaciers and sun-kissed peaks that slipped slowly by.

He felt that there was more to tell and, with an understanding of criminal psychology, he waited.

Again LaBelle was speaking, now in quick excited phrases. Then Black Fournier had killed another man. His name was Archie Gibeault. Fournier had chummed with him, and as they were on their way down-river to St. Michaels he'd shot him in the head and tossed him in the river. This time he'd secured close on six hundred dollars, and instead of continuing his journey to St. Michaels, and on Outside, aboard a steamer, Fournier had returned to Dawson to blow in his money on his sweetheart, Babe Courteau.

Ed lifted his hands in a gesture of horror. "Dat Fournier, *sacré*, he is not a man, by Gar. He is one black deemon. Now he's laugh when he's kill a man, kicks him in ze rivaire an' t'inks no more 'bout it. It is as t'ough he's kill one ox or caribou. Me! I'm no lak dat. I'm just vant for get as far from dat black *diable* as I can 'fore he's like for kill me, too. I know too much, maybe. So I go to Skagway an' tak' de steamaire sout'."

On September 15th Welsh delivered his prisoner to Inspector Routledge at Dawson and learned that Fournier had made a confession similar in effect to LaBelle's in which he blamed LaBelle for all the killings.

Aware that the contradictory evidence might yet defeat the ends of justice the Inspector detailed Corporal Piper and Constable Woodhill to investigate thoroughly the camp-site on the island where the Bouthillette party had met their tragic fate.

A little over a month later Ed LaBelle faced Judge Craig and a mixed jury of *cheechakos*, sourdoughs and townspeople. During the five days of the trial his good appearance and apparent anxiety to assist the cause of justice created a very favourable impression: Then Corporal Piper, tall and grim-faced, took the stand. In short, curt phrases he told of his visit to the camp-site. Then he unrolled a large sheet of canvas on which were stitched a weird assortment of objects, the numbers corresponding with those on a large map he had prepared.

There was a piece of human skull, charred by the camp-fire; the frame of a valise that had belonged to Bouthillette; charred hobnails similar to those extracted from Bouthillette's boot; two rosaries, charred buttons and some partly-burned scraps of a French newspaper.

Amid a silence that could be felt Corporal Piper played his trump card. From a small bag he produced two cylinders of

metal found on the site of the tent floor. They were discharged .44 calibre shells. For a split second his accusing eyes met those of the agitated prisoner. Then he produced a number of 45.90 shells found at points between the tent and the river. "The first two men, Constantine and Beaudoin, were shot in cold blood by LaBelle," he remarked in cold, incisive tones, "and Bouthillette was shot twice through the head by Fournier with his .44 revolver as he was in the act of dressing."

With face of chalk and eyes that seemed strangely large LaBelle watched the jury file grimly back a few hours later and in their granite faces read his doom.

A few days later Fournier swaggered into the dock, radiating insolence and defiance, a swarthy smile still lurking about his dark, predatory features. The evidence against him was overwhelming since Burns had located property of the victims which, with incredible stupidity, Fournier had brazenly sold in Dawson. As sentence was passed he turned his smouldering eyes upon the Judge.

"You sentence Black Fournier to deat', eh? All right—I will tell you somet'ing. Dat man LaBelle he's keel all four of dose men—an' he's 'ave a fine time runnin' 'round wid de flash womans." For a second his eyes burned into those of Detective Welsh with murderous hate. "An' you, ma frien', nevaire, *nevaire* will you sleep easy—min' you dat! "

It was fifty below zero when, on the early morning of January 20th, 1903, Fournier and LaBelle stood side by side on the gallows in the barracks yard to gaze for the last time through the violet half-light upon the snow-clad valley of the Yukon. LaBelle, nervous and trembling, had thrown himself into the arms of the Church. But not so Black Fournier. To the last he maintained his arrogant, swashbuckling attitude. His smouldering gaze rested cynically upon the hangman as he secured LaBelle's wrists and ankles. Then his deep-throated laughter rang derisively upon the frosty air as he flung the last taunting words he was to speak in this world at his partner in crime. "*Sacré, mon brave*, but you look fine! "

A moment later the inexorable law of the Mounted had triumphed once again. The killing of the Bouthillette party had been avenged.

CHAPTER VII

THE SEA WOLF OF THE ARCTIC

WHILE the Force was taming the Yukon, and bringing law and order to the gold camps of the Klondyke, there was one spot within the confines of that rugged territory that had escaped their hawk-like vigilance.

That spot was Herschel Island, a lozenge-shaped island eleven miles long and varying in width from three to four miles, lying west of the many-channelled delta of the Mackenzie almost in the shadow of Alaska's saw-toothed Endicotts. Actually it was little more than a lonely and unattractive mass of glacial ice with a counterpane of soil which, strangely enough, produced at least a hundred different kinds of plants and wild flowers under the torrid rays of the midnight sun during its brief respite from the tyranny of biting cold and howling Arctic blizzards.

The importance of Herschel Island arose from the fact that behind a sandspit which jutted out from its south-eastern coast there existed the snug little harbour of Pauline Cove; a veritable haven of refuge to the crews of those sturdy whaling vessels that buffeted their way around Point Barrow, northernmost point on the American continent, into the ice-filled waters of Canada's uncharted Western Arctic.

Until the summer of 1889 this desolate spot had been inhabited by naught but a few rosy-cheeked and genial Kigirktarugmuit Eskimos who, with extraordinary adaptability, had learned to make themselves relatively comfortable in a treeless land which the acquisitive white man with all his scientific knowledge and inventions had always shunned.

Armed with stone-headed lances, or harpoons shod with detachable barbs of bone, they had, for untold centuries, pursued the mammoth bowhead whales in their flimsy skin-covered oomiaks and kyaks, and hunted the polar bear and seal among the heaving ice-floes. When not at war with their traditional enemies, the *Ik-kil-in-ik*—as they called the Kutchin and Lou-choux Indians of the mainland—they carried on a sporadic trade with them, bartering caribou skins, ivory and whale-oil for drift-wood for sleds and harpoon handles, and native copper for knives and arrow-heads.

The erection of Fort McPherson by Chief Trader John Bell near the mouth of the Peel River in the summer of 1840 had made little difference in their ways since their wants were few and consisted mainly of knives, axes, needles, guns and kettles. They had, however, formed the habit of descending upon this isolated fort each summer and, for a short while, the willow-crested banks of the winding Peel would be dotted with the seal-skin tupeks of these hyperborean visitors. And, not infrequently, the factor would have the devil's own time preventing bloodshed between these Eskimos and their red-skinned foes.

But all was changed when adventurous American whalers proceeded to battle their way through the grinding ice-pack east of Point Barrow in search of bowhead whales and baleen. Yet the exploitation of these simple children of the Polar spaces presented an unforeseen problem when it came to trading furs, for they wanted little the white man had to offer and seemed singularly satisfied with their own aboriginal mode of life. From the whalers' point of view they needed to be educated into wanting quite a number of things ere they would be ripe for commercial exploitation. They would, for instance, have to be taught to discard their warm skin clothing for shoddy sweaters, and to acquire a taste for whisky, rum, flour, sowbelly and other things that could be bought cheaply at San Francisco and be sold at fabulous prices along the Arctic coast. This, in the parlance of the fur trade, is known as the "created want". So the whalers imported rascally Alaskan interpreters of mixed Eskimo blood into Canadian territory to help along the good work of bending these unsophisticated savages to the white man's will and enmeshing them in the tentacles of Caucasian commerce.

The arrival of this annual whaling fleet at Herschel Island soon became the signal for a bacchanalian orgy that beggared description and resulted frequently in murder. Down the gang-planks of a dozen vessels surged a motley horde of mixed humanity until the beach was overrun with a drunken mob of Orientals, Russians, Hawaiians, Portuguese, Yankees, Negroes and the off-scourings of the Barbary Coast, and hell itself was let loose among the driftwood igloos of the genial Nunatagmuits.¹

Rum, black as molasses and fiery as fire, flowed like water.

¹ The name generally applied by traders and others to the present aboriginal inhabitants of this region which includes a somewhat mixed population. The actual locale of the Nunatagmuit tribe is in the interior of Alaska, south-east of Point Barrow.—P.H.G.

Fighting, drinking and debauchery became the order of the day. Soon every Eskimo from nine to ninety was staggering around, drunk as a lord, howling, shouting and raising bedlam while cinnamon-cheeked belles, caught in the hairy arms of sodden beasts, were dragged aboard the vessels to disappear for days into the odoriferous depths of dank fo'c'sles.

For a week Herschel Island presented the appearance of an American outpost with the Star Spangled Banner fluttering from every masthead. For a week leathery-faced "mud pilots" tossed down pannikins of potent rum and drank to a plentiful catch of bowheads, then oily-cheeked "needle-women" were hired from their lawful spouses for a gun, a side of sowbelly or a bottle of rum, and the whaling fleet turned its blunt bows towards the ice-filled waters of the Beaufort Sea.

Within a decade the effect of the debauchery and contamination of these friendly Eskimos had exacted its toll, liquor, syphilis and other diseases contracted from the whalers having undermined their marvellous physique until their numbers had been reduced from two thousand to a scant four hundred, and their early extinction seemed inevitable.

Word of these lawless conditions at last reached the ears of Commissioner Aylesworth Bowen Perry, who, in August, 1900, had succeeded Lawrence Herchmer as head of the Force. The new Commissioner took stock of the situation. Here was an untamed wilderness two million square miles in extent; a vast land of game-filled forests, snow-capped mountains, mighty inland oceans, and blizzard-swept tundra over which the caribou still roamed in their countless millions. Yet, despite the fact that this mighty realm had passed from the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company at Confederation three decades before, most of it was still under the autocratic rule of the bearded fur factors. Few of the Indian hunters had ever seen a Mountie, and while they acknowledged a shadowy allegiance to the Great Mother, Queen Victoria, across the *Gitchee Gumme*, the biggest man in their lives was the chief factor, the uncrowned potentate of furland who made occasional journeys through their hunting grounds with his red ensign fluttering from the bow of his swift canoe, or in an immense red-painted carriage drawn by gaily caparisoned dogs and driven by fleet-footed runners in fringed and beaded buckskin. It was time the Force was extending its scarlet tentacles into the "interior" and taking over the policing and domination of these far-flung furlands.

By 1903 plans had been completed for a determined assault upon the Frozen Frontier. Major Moodie of "N" Division was to proceed to the dismal shores of Hudson Bay with a handful of men and take over the control of that region by establishing Police posts at Fullerton and at Fort Churchill where skin-clad Chipewyans continued to barter the illicit hides of the fast disappearing musk-oxen. To the westward the veteran Constantine, who had led the march into the Yukon, was to leave Fort Saskatchewan, headquarters of "G" Division, with another group of men for the mouth of the Mackenzie to carry the white man's law to the oval lodges of the slant-eyed Louchoux and the driftwood igloos of the Nunatagmuits.

Leaving Fort Saskatchewan on the bright warm morning of May 30th with a party comprising Sergeant Edward Fitzgerald and Constables "Moose" Munroe, Harry Walker, Galpin and Sutherland, he reached Athabasca Landing in time to catch the north-bound scow brigade.

Running the turbulent rapids of the Athabasca, bivouacking under the starlit canopy of the Northern sky, they swept on down the swift-flowing river with its yellow, fir-fringed outbanks till they reached the calmer waters below Fort McMurray, slipped on past historic Fort Chipewyan, and after crossing Smith Portage in ox-drawn Red River carts, boarded the steamer *Wrigley* for the sixteen hundred mile voyage down-river to the Arctic. For a brief while they stopped at Fort Resolution, the shoreline dotted with the smoke-stained caribou-skin lodges of the primitive Yellow Knives and Dog-Ribs from the Land of Little Sticks; steamed across the vast grey expanse of Great Slave Lake and entered the swift current of the Mackenzie to be swept past towering mountain ranges, abode of the mountain goat and big-horn sheep. At last the sun ceased to set, merely brushing the horizon and circling the sky again, while the spruce became small and stunted. They had passed the Arctic Circle.

At length, through a cold, damp mist that swirled and eddied above the winding willow-fringed Peel they glimpsed the grey-mudded buildings of Fort McPherson rising in stark desolation atop a high cutbank ahead. Here, at this forbidding and dreary spot—the northernmost fur post of the Hudson's Bay Company at the time—Constantine managed to secure the only empty building in the puny settlement as a barracks for his men, an empty, rat-infested cabin which belonged to the Anglican Mission.

Forty-eight hours later Constantine bid his men good-bye and

boarded the *Wrigley* for the long, tiresome, twenty-five hundred mile journey back up-stream to civilization.

"I felt," he wrote, "for the men standing there on the beach the feeling that came over our party in the Yukon back in '95 when the last steamer departed, leaving us cut off from the outside world for a year at least—strangers in a strange land."

Evidently he was far from favourably impressed with the dismal surroundings which were to be the focal point of the Force's activities in the lower Mackenzie and Western Arctic; forebodings which were to be only too well justified by subsequent events.

Before departing Constantine instructed Sergeant Fitzgerald to establish a detachment on Herschel Island, report on the activities of the whalers, and when winter came to locate the easiest sleigh trail between Fort McPherson and Dawson, five hundred miles to the south-west, so that communication could be maintained by dog-team.

Acting promptly on these orders, Fitzgerald obtained a whale-boat and in company with Sutherland set out for the Arctic Babylon. On August 7th they espied at last the lonely refuge of the American whaling crews rising in lofty aloofness from the ice-littered sea ahead and, a few hours later, were strolling among the driftwood igloos of the grinning Nunatagmuits—the first of the Force to set foot on Herschel Island and contact these genial people of the Polar spaces. They hadn't long to wait. A few days later the whalers put in an appearance.

"The first ship came in on August 12th," wrote Sutherland. "A fine sight, skimming between the ice-fields in smooth water. A lot of liquor came ashore the first few days, but eventually fell into our hands. We took three prisoners, and if there was only a J.P. here we could have pretty nearly tied up the whaling business. A Huskie fired a shot at the Sergeant, but was drunk and missed. I covered myself with glory by knocking the steward of the H . . . into two o'clock next summer. He was intoxicated ashore and refused to go aboard. I tried to lead him, he was about six feet and weighed two hundred and twenty pounds, but he wanted to fight, and he got it. It is a beastly business, and I wish I were out of it. But I have tried not to shirk my duty so far, so I suppose I must stick to it and show these Yankees there's a law or two even in the Arctic. We are nearly powerless except for our revolvers, which have been pulled out a good many times the last few days. Thank goodness they've accepted the bluff. I thought I knew the depths of a white man's crimes be-

fore, but if only you knew the tenth of what these whalers have been up to. . . . A low, scurrilous lot of unprincipled curs. The missionary says that if we had not been here, from the time the ships arrived the beach would have been one howling, crying, fighting mob of men, women, and even children."

In his report to Headquarters Fitzgerald portrayed vividly the difficulties which beset them in enforcing the law, stopping the liquor traffic and collecting customs dues from whalers who, up to that time, had looked upon Herschel Island as though it was American territory and their own particular hunting grounds.

"They claim they will not trade any tobacco," he wrote, "but they must trade it as the natives continue to smoke it. I cannot say anything to them as it would not do to let them know that I cannot punish them. They think that I have the same power as the officers of their own revenue cutters. If they once found out that I could only make a report I'm afraid plenty of liquor would come ashore. As it is they are very careful while the Police are on the island."

Thus with the consummate mingling of bluff, tact and diplomacy the "Wild Irishman", as Sutherland dubbed Fitzgerald, continued to rule his frigid kingdom and keep under a semblance of control the lawless crews of seven vessels—three hundred of the roughest and toughest of their kind, to whom even murder meant little or nothing.

Ever on the go, now at Herschel Island, now at Fort McPherson, at other times camping in the driftwood igloos of the Nunatagmuits or the oval lodges of the Kutchins, Fitzgerald's scrupulous fairness and genial personality quickly won him the regard of Eskimos, Indians, and even the toughest of the whalers.

But influences, destined to attract the attention of the outside world to the Arctic and bring about tremendous changes, were already at work; changes that were to add immeasurably to the problems of the Force and send red-coated patrols weaving a cob-web-like pattern across the vast, unexplored reaches to the eastward.

Nine years before Fitzgerald reached the Arctic a twenty-four-year-old Dane named Charlie Klengenbergh had visited the island. Cook aboard the *Mary D. Hume*, the sharp-featured, wiry man with the penetrating blue eyes and the feline quickness of a cat was destined to leave his impress upon this land that God forgot and to become, for many years thereafter, a thorn in the

sides of both Mounted Police and traders.

Born in a Danish fishing village overshadowed by the grey ruins of an ancient castle wherein conquering Vikings had once held wassail, Klengenberg had sailed as cabin-boy aboard a liner for the New World. Jumping ship in New York he had become an American citizen, sailed the Seven Seas and, going broke in 'Frisco, signed on aboard a whaler bound for a two years cruise into the Arctic.

Calling in at Herschel the ship had sailed in search of mammoth bowheads and finally nosed into a rocky harbour along the treeless coast of Bank's Land, five hundred miles to the eastward. Marked on Government maps as "unpopulated" it was a veritable no-man's-land, a place of utter desolation, devoid of any vegetation save the reindeer moss upon which the migratory caribou feasted when the females crossed from the mainland each spring to do their fawning. Something in its utter desolation seemed to strike a vibrant chord in the soul of Charlie Klengenberg. Its very awesomeness appealed to his Viking heart. It was unknown territory, and the Unknown had always beckoned to his hardy ancestors.

Shouldering a rifle he slipped ashore and trudged over the damp moors in search of caribou or polar bear. Suddenly he started. Linned upon the moss, mingling with the heart-shaped hoof tracks of caribou, were unmistakable prints of human feet. So, he soliloquized, the Government was wrong. These islands *were* inhabited. Somewhere behind the protecting mists to the eastward, in that land untrodden by the feet of white explorers, lurked an unknown race of Stone Age people. What an opportunity for a trader with a ship-load of powder, guns and trinkets!

With characteristic shrewdness he said nothing of his discovery to his shipmates. But his mind was made up. Some day he'd return and exploit this region for himself.

Back at Point Hope on the ice-scarred rocks of Alaska he for ever linked his destiny with the Arctic. Peeping from beneath the wolferine-trimmed hood of her ahtégi the roguish eyes of furs-clad Gremnia struck the rover to his knees, the romance being consummated at a blubber banquet to the booming reverberations of six-foot drums of polar bear-hide. Soon, to all intents and purposes, Klengenberg became an Eskimo himself. With his cinnamon-checked bride beside him he went floor-whaling, harpooned the seal and polar bear, and lived in the driftwood igloos

of his adopted people, his mind ever on those footprints on the distant moors of lonely Bank's Land.

Eleven long cold years rolled by. Three round-eyed, coppery-cheeked cubs had been added to his Arctic household. Then came the summer of 1905—the Year of the Bad Ice—the year that so many whaling vessels were crushed in the Polar ice and carried to Davy Jones's locker.

Crashing and pounding their way through the ice-fields, the *Olga* and *Charles Hanson* made the harbour at Point Barrow and Captain James McKenna, their owner, rowed ashore, searching for an ice-pilot.

"Charlie," boomed the familiar voice of the Captain. "Little Charlie! The very man I want." His weather-beaten face crinkled into a smile. "How about going as far as Herschel Island as my ice-pilot?"

Within a short time Klengenberg had bundled family and baggage aboard the staunch *Charles Hanson* and the two ships were headed eastward.

Hunched atop a coil of rope a week after arriving at the island Klengenberg's thoughts turned once again towards that mystic land to the eastward. Again strange visions arose to disturb his peace of mind; visions of a Stone Age empire in a land that God forgot, of untold wealth amassed from the backs of polar bears and Arctic foxes; of stout ships carrying a furry fortune to the marts of America and Europe from a chain of trading posts reared amongst those still undiscovered people to the east of lonely Bank's Land, and himself the centre of it all.

His reveries were interrupted by the gruff voice of McKenna summoning him aboard the *Olga*.

"I'm through with that damned Thorlackson," growled the Captain. "How'd you like to skipper the *Olga*?"

Klengenberg disguised his jubilation. For an hour they talked together, and when the Dane strode down the gang-plank an enigmatic smile played around the corners of his mouth. So McKenna didn't trust Thorlackson, his ex-captain. Well, he certainly hadn't displayed any large amount of trust in his new skipper either since before offering him the *Olga* he'd thoughtfully transferred all but two weeks supply of provisions to the *Charles Hanson*. Was he afraid he'd run away with his lousy ship . . . that this would make him hug the *Hanson*?

Next morning Klengenberg moved his family aboard and assumed command of the *Olga*. The following day they headed

out into the Beaufort Sea. On the third day out one of those thick fogs, so prevalent in the Arctic, descended suddenly, blotting everything from sight. When it lifted the *Olga* had completely disappeared.

While McKenna grimly scoured the ice-filled seas from the crow's nest with his telescope the sailors in the fo'c'sle speculated and wondered. What had happened? Had Charlie proven a better cook than a seaman, got nipped in the ice and gone with the *Olga* to the bottom? Or, some grinned knowingly, had the versatile and not over-scrupulous Klink slipped around the *Charles Hanson* in the fog and headed for China or the South Seas with the intention of selling the ship and pocketing the money?

"A crew of ten men can't live long on two weeks grub," McKenna growled with grim satisfaction. "The *Olga*'ll soon show up."

But the *Olga* did *not* show up. A year slipped by. Once again the whaling fleet was preparing to leave the protection of Pauline Cove to face the icy terrors of the Beaufort Sea in search of bowheads and baleen when from the masthead of a schooner there came a shrill cry. All eyes swung past the headland towards the blue-white horizon to the eastward, broken now by a diminutive point of indigo. Closer and closer came the unknown vessel till excitement took the whaling fleet by storm. The ship was the missing *Olga*!

With billowing sails she dodged the ice-pans neatly, swung around the point and headed up the harbour. At the helm, in wolverine-trimmed ahtegi, stood Klengenberg snapping out his orders. Lines were flung to waiting Nunatagmuits, snubbed to deadmen, and the crew walked down the gang-plank.

Whalers eyed each other questioningly. Nine men had sailed aboard the *Olga*. Yet only five had followed the Dane down the gang-plank. Where were the other four?

Shepherding his crew before him, Klengenberg strode grimly towards the white-painted barracks of the Mounted Police and entered. "Inspector Howard," he gazed sharply at the tall, impassive veteran who had recently come north from Athabasca Landing, "I want to make a statement." Then, under the furtive scrutiny of his bearded crew the Captain told a strange and tragic story.

Yes, Klengenberg admitted, he'd borrowed the ship all right. He'd intended to search for an unknown race he knew dwelt far

to the eastward. He hadn't worried about the shortage of grub . . . he'd just "borrowed" supplies from a whalers' cache at Langton Bay he happened to know of. These he'd loaded aboard along with the shack that housed them, planning on using the lumber for winter quarters. Then he'd pressed on into the *terra incognita* to the eastward, wrestling with fog and ice and Arctic blizzards till at last he'd put the prow of the *Olga* into an inlet on Woolaston Land and come into contact with a horde of small, brown, Tartar-faced men strangely attired in swallow-tailed coats of skin with small hoods from which the ears of the caribou arose like spiked horns.

With a savage named Anarak he'd travelled overland, his komatik loaded with pans, knives and bits of scrap-iron. Rounding a low bluff he'd come upon hundreds of shaggy, hooded figures cavorting about in the moonlight to the booming reverberations of a polar bear-gut drum. Overcoming the suspicions of these Stone Age Cogmollock Eskimos with gifts of scrap-iron he'd been entertained in their snow igloos and traded off his stuff for white fox and polar bear-skins and an assortment of stone pots, musk-ox horn implements and bows and copper-tipped arrows.

On his return he'd found the engineer drunk on alcohol he'd been making from flour and sugar that could ill be spared. When he'd taken Jackson to task the man had attacked him with a marline-spike and he'd been forced to shoot him in self-defence. Then old Jones had died of scurvy, and two other members of the crew, Walter and Herman, had broken through bad ice and drowned.

One by one the bearded crew corroborated Klengenbergs's strange story under the baleful scrutiny of the Captain's searching gaze.

There was much wild talk among the whalers. Surging about the barracks they insisted that the Captain be arrested and charged with murder. But Captain McKenna, owner of the stolen vessel, was not there to press the charge, and the question arose as to whether or not the *Olga* was American territory. So Inspector Howard decided to await McKenna's return and, in the meantime, to keep a sharp watch on the *Olga* so that the wily Klengenbergs couldn't spirit her away again.

While whalers stormed and argued Klengenbergs went about his daily tasks as though he hadn't a worry in the world. Then one night, while Herschel Island slept, he quietly loaded his Eskimo wife and hybrid progeny aboard his whaleboat and

disappeared for the safety of the Alaskan boundary, forty odd miles to the westward, where the Mounted Police had no jurisdiction.

In no time the island was buzzing like a beehive. Now, with the menace of the blue-eyed Viking removed, the *Olga's* crew told a vastly different story. No longer was it the chapter of accidents they'd sworn to under the baleful gaze of the buccaneering Klengenberg, but a story of horror and murder. They had, they admitted, been in mortal terror of their lives as long as the Captain remained around.

When the fog had descended the year before, Klengenberg had promptly spread all canvas and, with utter disregard of danger, had pushed the *Olga* through grinding ice and howling blizzards, steering ever to the eastward. When Engineer Jackson had protested Klengenberg had accused him of mutiny and shot him, and the crew had carried the wounded man to his bunk in the fo'c'sle. Old Man Jones, who'd sided with the engineer, had been thrown into the hold in chains, and when exposure and starvation had finished the poor wretch his emaciated body had been cast overboard to feed the sea-lice.

As Jackson slowly recovered he swore vengeance, word of which promptly reached the Captain. One morning a shadow fell across the entrance to the fo'c'sle. Looking up from his bunk Jackson saw the menacing figure of Klengenberg towering above him, gun in hand.

Only Walter and Herman saw what happened. A gunshot boomed within and as he emerged from the fo'c'sle Klengenberg gave orders to heave the body overboard.

By this time, the crew reported, Klengenberg had set his mind on two things; he intended to locate a mountain of gold said to exist in the heart of untrudged Victoria Land, and to discover these unknown people who had occupied his mind so long. At last they'd put into winter quarters on Woolaston Land, and a horde of strange fur-clad figures had descended upon them. Though hostile at first they'd been won over by presents of scraps of iron, mirrors, knives and other odds and ends.

They were queer people, these Tartar-faced Cogmollock Eskimos amongst whom they were forced to winter, and dressed quite differently from the Eskimos of the Mackenzie Delta and Alaska. The only way you could distinguish between the women and the men was that the former wore short tails to their skin ahtegis and large hoods in which to carry their naked infants

while the men wore long tails and small, tight-fitting cowls. In the fall they hunted the vast caribou herds over at the crossings on the mainland for meat, and skins for clothing. In winter they moved out on to the sea-ice, erected their snow igloos, harpooned the seal and hunted Nanuk, the polar bear. Now and then they'd make long journeys southward to the Land of Little Sticks, in the country of the hostile Yellow Knives and Dog-Ribs, to get wood for their sleds and bows and arrows.

The Captain discovered that the mountain of gold was merely a boulder of copper the size of a whaleboat and had turned his attention to bartering white fox and polar bear-skins from the Stone Age Cogmollocks. Meanwhile, the crew admitted, they fought and quarrelled in their cramped quarters, and in order to preserve themselves made plans to kill the skipper, take command of the ship and sail first chance for Herschel Island.

Not till July did Klengenberg turn the prow of the *Olga* westward and push through the ragged floe-ice. Food was already short when, one morning, a band of caribou were sighted travelling along the shore. Promptly the Captain ordered Walter and Herman, the sole witnesses of the killing of Jackson, ashore to get fresh meat. An off-shore wind was blowing and the men hesitated till they caught the glint in the old man's eye. But the moment they stepped ashore on the treeless waste they realized they'd fallen into a trap.

Slowly, but with remorseless certainty, the ice to which the *Olga* was anchored was moving out to sea. Vainly the poor fellows attempted to get back aboard, only to find themselves covered by the Captain's rifle and hear his gruff command that they'd not get back aboard until they brought the meat. That was the last they'd seen of their shipmates, and for many nights thereafter the piteous cries of the marooned wretches kept ringing in their ears.

As Herschel Island hove in sight all were mustered on the foredeck. "Boys," snarled the Captain in his cold, incisive way, "the penalty for killing five—or six—men is the same as for killing four. Remember that when you get to Herschel Island. Here's what you'll say when you meet the Police." And he outlined the story he proposed to tell.

Wild talk swept the island. Some of the whalers proposed to form a posse and run down the buccaneer. But Judge Marsh, who happened to be there, counselled caution, took down the depositions of the crew with the help of the youthful Stefansson,

then on his first visit to the Arctic, and promised prompt action by the United States Government as soon as he returned to San Francisco.

But many long years were to elapse ere the Law caught up with the elusive Dane. Somewhere in the unexplored fastnesses of the Arctic, among his adopted people, he reared a hidden stronghold. There he hunted the bowhead whale, the caribou and the polar bear, and trapped the Arctic foxes, an outlaw amongst his own people, an uncrowned king amongst the pagan Eskimos, trading his furs surreptitiously with the skippers of friendly American whalers.

At last the long wings of the American Eagle threw their shadow athwart the lonely lair of the rover. Whisked aboard a U.S. revenue cutter he was carried to San Francisco to face the charge of murder filed by Judge Marsh years before. Lodged behind steel bars he was brought before Judge Van Fleet of the California Supreme Court—and acquitted. Strong influences, it is said, were brought to bear by those companies that had made large profits trading with the outlawed Sea Wolf. And so Klengenberg returned again to the Arctic—a good American citizen but without a penny to his name.

But Destiny, through the ubiquitous Captain, was pulling strings which were to result in the speedy opening up of the untrodden reaches of the Arctic. An unknown explorer at the time, Stefansson had thrilled to the stories of these men of the Ice Age with whom the Dane had wintered. He had seen the caribou skin garments of unusual design, the stone mauls and pots, the musk-ox horn implements and weapons tipped with native copper which formed part of Klengenberg's cargo. From Roald Amundsen, who had arrived at Herschel after successfully negotiating the North-West Passage shortly after Klengenberg's unconventional departure with the *Olga*, and had been forced by bad ice to winter there, Stefansson had heard of still other Eskimos encountered by this famous explorer in the vicinity of King William's Land. All of which had inspired Mr. Stefansson with the desire to penetrate into the mysterious Central Arctic and study this interesting link with the Stone Age. Returning to civilization he organized another expedition, and on May 10th, 1910, reached the igloos of Klengenberg's Cogmollocks. Ere long the newspapers of the world were headlining the new biological discovery made by this explorer in the frozen fastnesses of the Central Arctic—the discovery of blue-eyed "Blonde" Eskimos!

It was all that was necessary to turn men's eyes to the northward. A new and unsophisticated race spelled enormous possibilities in trade and profits. Thus was the stage set for the next act in the assault of the white race upon the Frozen Frontier.

At times as many as fifteen hundred to two thousand whalers were penned up in the dim fo'c'sles of the hibernating fleet at Herschel Island. Imprisoned in these dark domiciles the disgruntled sailors fought in vain against the enforced inactivity that bit into their very souls. To venture far from the ships and the lifelines strung from hut to hut was courting death and disaster. For Arctic blizzards cracked down unheralded and with an impetuous ferocity that overwhelmed the puny efforts of these humans to resist them if caught in the open. At the foot of Pauline Cove eighteen painted sticks that rose from the frozen earth warned of a Christmas Day when twenty whalers had been caught in a sudden blizzard while playing baseball within a stone's throw of their vessels, all but two getting frozen to death.

Drinking, fighting and quarrelling, with rebellion eating like a canker into their souls, parties of mutinous whalers, determined to flee their enforced imprisonment, escaped to the mainland under the belief that once there they could push on to fairer and more congenial climes. Instead, they faced a cruel and unfriendly world devoid of even trees for fire and shelter. Many froze in their tracks. Others groped their way to the igloos of roaming Eskimos or the lodges of the Louchoûx Indians. A few, mere caricatures of humans, reached Rampart House on the Alaskan border where they had to be looked after by the Mission. Pursued by officers, others were stripped in an effort to force them to return, while on one occasion a pitched gun battle ensued between the mutineers and their pursuers. Among the reports carried to Inspector Constantine at Dawson was that of an Eskimo, crazed with liquor, who had strung his daughter up by the heels and cut the life out of her with a walrus-hide dog whip. The missionary had intervened, drunken sailors had flailed the Eskimo within an inch of his life and only resolute action of the whalers had prevented a wholesale massacre.

Between the pioneering visit of the *Grampus* to Herschel in the summer of '89 and the collapse of the whaling industry (see page 111), thirteen hundred whales, worth fourteen million dollars, had been taken from Canada's back door by the American whaling fleet.—P.H.G.

CHAPTER VIII
THE CLUE OF THE BROKEN NEEDLE

WHILE Inspector Howard and Sergeant Fitzgerald were making the Arctic safe for Eskimos to live in, the vast region to the southward was not being overlooked by the watchdogs of the Mounted. Here, in these silent forests, skin-clad Dog-Ribs, Chipewyans, Crees and hunters of a dozen different tribes toiled on their webbed snowshoes through the silvered aisles of the snow-laden spruce woods in quest of the otter, lynx and marten, and that prize of the furlands—the pelt of the glossy silver fox. From time to time they would leave their smoke-stained lodges, hitch up their slat-ribbed huskies and visit the picketed fur forts which dotted the land to barter their spoils with the bearded factors of the Company. During the century that had elapsed since the contending Nor'-Westers and Hudson's Bay Company had ceased their war for supremacy and amalgamated, the country had been strangely peaceful and lacking in major crimes.

But times had changed. The nondescript hordes of Klondykers who had chosen to follow the Mackenzie route to the Yukon had left behind them a legacy of misery, unrest and disease that had necessitated the sending North in the summer of '89 a special treaty commission under the Honourable David Laird to remedy, as far as possible, the evils that had occurred and prevent what threatened to become a serious outbreak.¹

Now, in order to protect the redmen from the dregs of this invasion, and from the depredations of certain types of white settlers who were penetrating the Silent Places in ever-increasing numbers, Commissioner Perry had pushed the red-roofed barracks of the scarlet-coated *Shimarganishuk* farther and farther into the wilds of Athabasca. For the most part the duties of these men consisted in handling petty cases of pilfering and robbery and controlling the smuggling of contraband liquor into the Territories, for which Indians and half-breeds displayed an inordinate liking.

¹ See *Through the Mackenzie Basin* by Charles Mair, a member of the treaty commission. Wm. Briggs, Toronto, 1908.

Of serious crimes, however, the country had been singularly free, and Staff-Sergeant Anderson little thought as he guided his sweating roan along the trail that wound around reed-filled Buffalo Bay that balmy September afternoon in 1904 that he would soon be coping with one of the most difficult cases in his long and colourful career.

Reaching the Hudson's Bay post, which overlooked the blue waters of Lesser Slave Lake, the Sergeant dismounted, tethered his horse to the hitching rail and entered the small white office of the factor. Surveying the burly Iclander from behind a pile of beaver pelts Miles McDermott emitted a taciturn grunt and turned again to the willowy Cree beside him.

"There ye are, Wapunekapow. Tak' that order ower tae the store. George'll fix ye up. And dinna forget winter's nigh upon ye and it's nae time tae be throwin' yer money awa' on fancy baubles. Weel, Andy," he smiled sourly at the Sergeant, "what's the trouble noo?"

The policeman flopped a large roll of soggy bills on the counter. "Would you yust count this money for me, Miles? I vant a vittness to testify to the amount."

"Oh, a'richt." Picking up the money McDermott dropped it with a convulsive gasp. "Good God . . . where did ye get that money? Quick, Hodgson—open the door!"

"I yust got it off the body!" Andy grinned.

"Body!" Miles glowered across the counter. "What body?"

"The body of that Englishman that got drowned in Buffalo Bay last spring."

"Weel—get it oot o' here quick's ye can—the stink's awful."

"Yust a minute, Miles, yust a minute. You vatch and I'll count it."

Beaming broadly, the Sergeant commenced pawing the bills with his huge hands, moistening his finger with his tongue from time to time with an utter disregard for germs and hygiene, to the unveiled horror of the young apprentice clerk.

McDermott's features registered his withering disgust. "Andy," he growled, "I've met some hard-boiled policemen in ma time, but ye're the toughest yet. For God's sake hurry an' git oot o' here."

In saying that Andy was the toughest policeman he ever knew Miles was merely expressing the sentiment of every fur-trader, riverman and roughneck from Athabasca Landing to the Rockies.

Literally and figuratively Andy was a law unto himself, and Northerners maintained that he wouldn't have hesitated, if the occasion arose, to arrest his own mother for a breach of the Code he was enforcing. One of the famous stories told round the camp-fires was of the time he dogged a criminal for months, only to find him buried deep in the heart of the Rockies. Anxious to show that he had caught up with his quarry he was said to have severed the head and brought it back in a gunnysack for evidence, scaring the wits out of an inquisitive nigger porter on the train who let his curiosity get the better of him and peered into the sack.¹

When all attempts to stem the flow of illicit firewater into Indian territory had failed, the Officer Commanding "N" Division had sent the Sergeant to Lesser Slave Lake and, in six months, the bootleg gang who had made the place accursed for nearly a decade were either behind the bars or had fled to safer climes. For the irrepressible Andy would rush in where angels feared to tread and, with a stubbornness of purpose his enemies mistook for stupidity, appeared to blunder ahead yet always got his man.

As he jogged back towards the barracks he became aware of the pad, pad of moccasined feet behind him. Turning in the saddle he espied the leathery-faced chief from the nearby Sucker Lake Reserve.

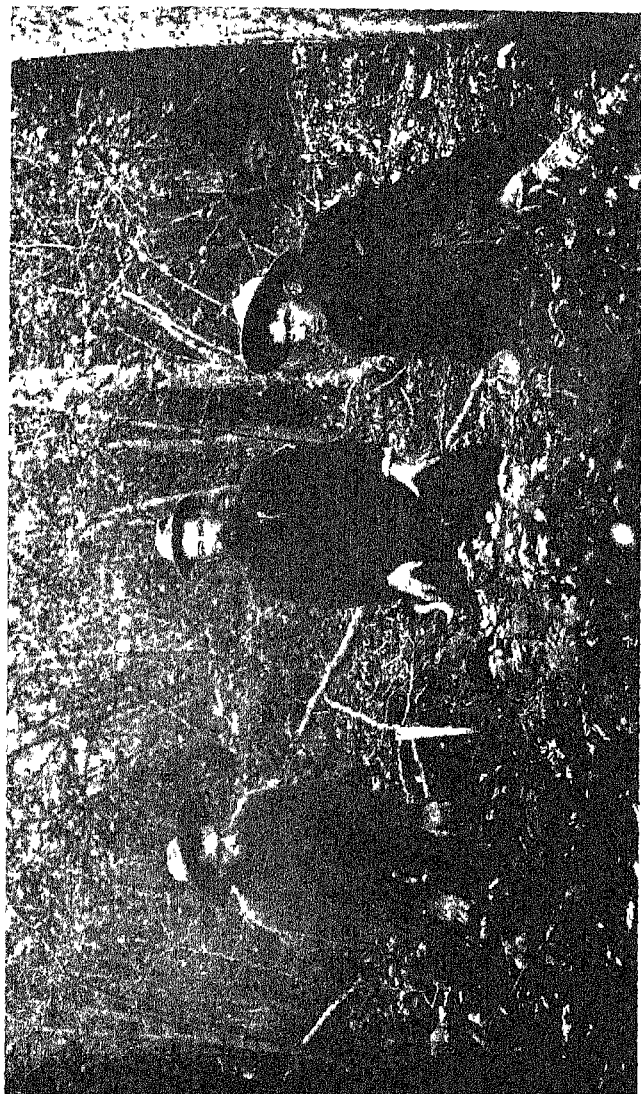
"Vell, Mistoos," he smiled, reining in his horse, "and vat do you vant? More grub!"

"*Nemoyah!*" Peering cautiously around the Indian spoke softly and earnestly in the sibilant patois of the Cree. A tall, black-bearded man and a companion named Char-lee, who walked with a twist to his body, had camped at the reserve not long before. Two days later the tall *Shagonash* had disappeared, and finally the other had ridden off with all the horses. There had been much talk among the tepees, and the chief had found his cattle pawing over the ashes of the pale-faces' camp-fires and bawling, as animals do, when they scent blood.

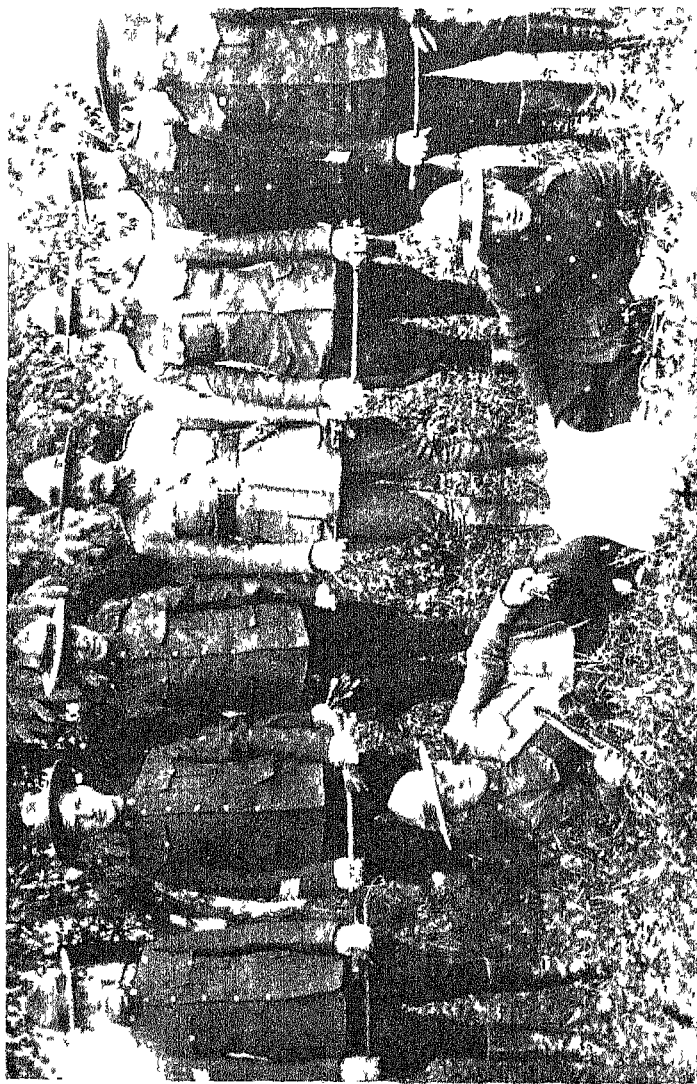
Impassively the Sergeant listened, shot a few swift questions in Cree and, with the promise to ride over to the reserve, flicked his reins and rode thoughtfully on towards the barracks.

That a thin stream of liquor was still trickling into the

¹ When in the Lesser Slave region in 1911 I frequently heard this story told around trading posts and camp-fires, and those who told it hadn't the slightest doubt as to its authenticity.—P.H.G.



MURDER ISLAND. CORPORAL PIPER (*centre*) GATHERING EVIDENCE AT SCENE OF THE KILLING
[*Corporal Storm Piper*]



(Courtesy ex. Inspector Ingle son

STAFF-SERGEANT ANDERSON (centre, standing)

Territories was evidenced when old Turkey McLeod served dinner that evening. First he slipped and dropped a dish of corned beef hash upon the floor, then he projected a scalding arc of tea upon the tablecloth.

"Vell, Turkey—vare did you get it?"

A look of pained surprise crossed Turkey's face. "Shay—what d'yu mean where did I get it? Thash good permit likker. I got it from Bill Doherty at Revillon's."

"H'm! Isn't permit liquor only supposed to be for medicinal purposes?"

"Shay," hiccoughed Turkey by way of changing the subject, "that bird Charlie King who's staying at Moise Gladu's has sure got a fine bunch o' cayuses. Got quite a raft o' traps, too, though I ain't figgered out yet just why he wants to pack around a ten-pound bear trap when the woods are full o' timber for making dead-falls."

The Sergeant plied his knife and fork in silence, his mind upon the story the chief had told him just an hour before.

Scarcely had the sun dropped behind the serrated pines, bathing the conical lodges of Mistoos's tribesmen in a flood of scarlet, than the Sergeant dismounted before the chief's tepee. Pushing aside the door-flap he entered and squatted cross-legged upon the carpet of spruce boughs while the chief's broad-backed squaw ponasked a succulent side of moose ribs before the lodge fire.

"*Chesqual!*" grunted Mistoos as he dived through the oval doorway to return a few minutes later with a couple of coppery youngsters. "Napasise and Moonias," he informed him, "will tell you of their visit to the camp of the two *Shagonash*."

Skillfully questioning the young braves the Sergeant elicited the following information. On their visit to the camp the tall white man had given them some food. Afterwards they had sat around and watched him sewing a piece of leather on his gun-stock, thinking how foolish it was since how could a piece of leather make the gun shoot any straighter. The tall *Shagonash* had used a big needle, like those employed by the traders in sewing up their fur bales, while, on his right hand, he had worn a queer-looking fingerless glove which he used to push the needle through the leather. They had also noticed a big silver buckle on his belt and that, wherever he went, he was followed by a big collie dog which seemed devoted to its master.

"Where were they going?" asked the Sergeant.

"Olanak—the settlement," replied the younger lad without

a moment's hesitation. "The tall man disappeared after the second night, but the one called Char-lee didn't leave till three days later; then he rode away with the horses and traps and everything. But," added Napasise significantly, "he had to lead the dog with a string for it kept whining beside the fireplace and didn't want to go away."

Mistoos's squaw fidgeted. "I heard there were lots of ashes there," she volunteered in Cree, "so I went over and gathered some to make lye with." She threw a piece of burned cloth with a button attached over to the Sergeant. "I found this amongst the ashes."

That night as Anderson lay in his blanket gazing through the smoke-hole of the lodge at the twinkling stars above he decided to look over the camp-site ere returning. Probably the men had merely had a tiff, split up, and each had gone his own way. Such misunderstandings were not infrequent upon the trail. Moreover, gossip was not unknown among the tepees. When, however, he recalled the squaw's remark concerning the quantity of ashes he wondered, for the weather had been warm.

An Indian encampment rises early, and the morning sun had barely risen above the woods when Anderson and Mistoos dismounted before the camp-site and proceeded to examine the surroundings.

"*Mistay picotay*—Lots of ashes!" grunted the chief, motioning towards the fireplace.

The fire had been an exceptionally large one, for a thick bed of ashes covered an area five feet long and four feet wide. In a winter camp this would not have been unusual, but such a large accumulation of ashes in warm weather was difficult to understand.

Crawling around on hands and knees the Sergeant sifted the ashes systematically. At last his fingers encountered something hard—a piece of bone. Another followed, and still another. Suddenly his lips tightened as his fingers closed on something soft—a piece of flesh. As another and larger piece was added to the mounting pile the chief scrutinized it closely.

"*Mitay!*—Heart!" he vouchsafed.

Lifting his wide-brimmed Stetson the Sergeant ruffled his tawny crop of hair. The bones and flesh could easily have been part of a moose or some other animal, but what of the heart? Grimly he continued the investigation, sensing that he was the target of many pairs of eyes hidden behind the encircling wall of

willows. Pieces of charred cloth, and other bits of bone were added to the collection. Finally Andy straightened up, placed them in a bark receptacle and turned to the chief.

"Mistoos—I don't want anyone to touch these ashes, or anything around here, till I come back."

The glimmer of water through the willows took Andy to a small slough where the men had evidently obtained their water. Prowling around the edge he prodded here and there with a willow. Mistoos turned to Moonias, who ran over to the lodges and returned with a twisted rake.

Slipping off his long boots the Sergeant rolled up his trousers and waded, knee-deep, into the water, feeling about in the slimy mud with his toes while Mistoos dragged the bottom with the rake. Suddenly the chief emitted an exultant yell and held aloft a battered kettle. The Indian lads were yelling from the shore: "*A-ogo!* That's it. The kettle the white men used."

Wading ashore the Sergeant returned to the fireplace and scrutinized the earth, grass, and even the moss among the willows with the expert eye of a frontiersman. Outlined in the damp mould were the imprints of moccasins, six or eight days old, leading from the lodges to the camp and back again. Why, he wondered, had this Indian, whoever he was, approached the camp by stealth and returned in the same manner? Did this account for the scrutiny to which he felt he had been subjected?

As he cantered back towards the settlement he turned things over in his mind. Some mystery certainly seemed to surround the sudden and inexplicable disappearance of the stranger the Indians called "the tall Englishman", yet the thought of murder seemed absurd. Had the men been on their way Outside with a valuable catch of furs there would have been an obvious motive, but as it was . . . Clattering across the wooden bridge at Shaw's Point he rode down the narrow avenue of poplars and halted before Moise Gladu's cabin.

"*Bo'jou!*" grinned Moise as he entered. "Sit down, Sergeant. Dese damn fine day, eh? Looks lak it's goin' to be open fall."

Andy's ice-blue eyes were making a swift appraisal of everything within. "Vell, Moise," he smiled, "you've sure got lots of traps. Figure on going trapping?"

"*Non, monsieur,*" Moise shook his shaggy head, "dem traps belong for Charlie King. He's come from Edmonton. Now he's wait for go out on ze steamaire. He's quit an' want for sell dem."

A shadow passed the window. There was a tug at the latch-string and a thick-set, pleasant-faced man wearing a wide sombrero entered. The slight twist to his body told the Sergeant that this was Charlie King.

"Howdy!" The stranger nodded and Andy found himself looking into a pair of friendly and almost timorous grey eyes. Chatting affably with the newcomer he led the conversation round to King's trip north from Athabasca Landing without arousing his suspicions. The man spoke frankly. He'd met a stranger who gave his name as Leaman near the Sand Hills and together they'd camped on the reserve. Two days later Leaman had set out for Sturgeon Lake on a prospecting trip, carrying his pack on his back, while he'd remained behind to rest his horses.

King seemed a harmless and easy-going fellow with nothing of the desperado about him, and the Sergeant found his suspicions evaporating like snow before the summer sun. Again his thoughts reverted to that moccasin trail amongst the willows, and the furtive watching redskins. His way seemed far from clear. Had he been following a wrong trail? And was old Mistoos dissembling in characteristic redskin style to protect some of his own braves?

Returning to the red-roofed barracks at Buffalo Bay he sent for Constable Lowe. "Better saddle up," he told him. "Get what rations you need from Turkey McLeod and leave pronto for the post at Sturgeon Lake." In a few swift words he described King's missing partner. "Search every stopping place," he ordered. "Talk to every Indian along the trail, and report back here as quick as you know how."

That same evening Andy had a long and confidential chat with Miles McDermott at the post.

As Turkey McLeod lit the coal-oil lamp a few nights later there came a knock at the barracks door and a tall, slouch-hatted half-breed entered, obviously ill at ease.

The Sergeant eyed him searchingly. "*Bo'jour*, Alexis! Did Miles McDermott send you over?"

"*Oui, monsieur*. I'm just come from Sturgeon Lake."

"Did you see anything of a tall white man with a black beard anywhere along the trail?"

"*Non, monsieur*. I'm meet no one but some *savauges*—and ze *Constable*," he added as an afterthought, and seemed decidedly relieved when the Sergeant dismissed him after a few curt questions.

The moment his creaking cart disappeared along the road towards the Mission Anderson jerked down the blinds, slipped a pair of handcuffs in the pocket of his tunic, buckled on his holstered .45 and sauntered up the trail towards the Hudson's Bay post.

"Have you any warrants, Miles?" he demanded.

"Aye."

"Vell—I vant von for Charlie King."

The factor raised his shaggy eyebrows. "An' what's the charge?"

"Make it murder," suggested the Sergeant coolly.

"A'richt. Hae it ony way ye like, but ah'm thinkin' ye're a' wrang."

Miles shook his head doubtfully as his spluttering pen moved over the warrant.

Lesser Slave Lake settlement rocked with laughter next morning when word got round that Andy had arrested Charlie King for murder all because he'd found some bits of moose bone in the ashes of his camp-fire. From an insignificant trapper King was launched forthwith into the role of a popular hero to whom the sympathy of every Indian, 'breed and white man was extended. This was the best joke yet!

While King indignantly protested his innocence behind the bars at Buffalo Bay Anderson proceeded doggedly to round up all his possessions, including those the prisoner had disposed of. Soon the Police barn housed his four horses, each bearing on their flanks the "Diamond C" brand, while, in the outhouse, were assembled a big bear trap, fifty small traps, canvas panniers, pack-saddles and the usual prospector's outfit. Meanwhile the stern-wheeled *Midnight Sun*, upon which King was about to set foot when Andy's muscular fingers closed upon his shoulder, was chugging south across the blue waters of Lesser Slave Lake on her weekly trip to the frontier settlement of Athabasca Landing.

Some intuitive hunch had impelled the Sergeant to take the plunge despite the fact that his evidence was almost negligible and that he would have much to do to justify his high-handed action in preventing King from getting a week's start on him by leaving on the steamer.

Again the Sergeant turned his horse's head towards the Cree lodges. Reaching the encampment he found Mistoos still standing guard over the camp-site. Untying a gauze window screen from his saddle he proceeded to sift the ashes carefully. He was

rewarded with more pieces of flat charred bone which might have been part of a skull, a blackened waistcoat button, and a broken cobbler's needle. A whoop from the slough sent him there with swift strides in time to relieve an Indian of a dripping pair of top-boots. As he drained them a soggy bundle thudded at his feet.

Unwinding the wet cloth he sorted out the contents: a nugget tie-pin, a round sovereign case, part of a gold watch-chain, an empty cartridge shell and a watch. A small sliver of metal glinted on the ground. Hurrying to the camp-site Anderson compared it with the broken needle. The two bits of steel fitted perfectly together, linking the discoveries in the ashes definitely with the objects found in the slough. An examination of the boots showed that the left heel was worn down on the inside. There remained the tie-pin and the sovereign case, the latter pointing to the owner being an Englishman. The situation seemed immeasurably improved.

As Andy gazed over the greying waters he felt convinced that beneath the rippling surface lay hidden the key to the mystery he was trying to unravel. If he could only drain that slough! But winter would be upon the land ere permission could be obtained from Headquarters, and by that time the slough would be frozen to the bottom.

Back at the white-painted barracks he pored over the pages of his bank-book. Fifteen years of arduous Police work hadn't brought him any fortune. On the contrary, his balance was pitifully small. His wife and children had to be considered. Yet, above everything, there was his duty—and it beckoned like a flaming beacon. Scratching his head he did some figuring with a pencil, slipped the book back into the drawer and sighed. He had made up his mind at last. He'd pay for the draining of the slough himself.

The clop, clop of hoofs broke his reverie and a moment later Lowe entered, his clothing grey with the dust of the trail.

"Vell?" inquired the Sergeant.

"I rode as far as Tom Carr's post at Sturgeon Lake," Lowe reported, "and inquired at all the Indian camps and stopping places along the trail. Nobody's seen this Leaman, or anyone like him."

"Yust what I thought, Lowe. Anything else?"

"No, sir, except that Deome Dejarlais met King the day he put up at Gladu's and he offered his whole outfit to Deome for three hundred dollars."

"All right, Constable. Better hit the hay, you'll be leaving on the *Midnight Sun* in the morning to escort King out to Edmonton."

"The charge, sir? "

"Murder! " snapped Anderson abruptly.

Early next morning Andy rode to Shaw's Point to see Lowe off to Edmonton with his prisoner, then plunged into the tunnel of yellow and scarlet foliage to commence the work of draining the slough. The falling leaves, and the cold breath from the north which brushed his cheek, warned him that he would not have too much time.

At the reserve he found the Indians aloof and uncommunicative, some of them almost sullen. Nevertheless they jumped at the opportunity of making a little money by helping to drain the slough. Soon every able-bodied brave was behind the business end of a shovel.

While the swamp was being drained Anderson followed a narrow trail through the willows to the nearby cabin of Casmir Cardinal. For a couple of hours white man and half-breed talked together beside the mud fireplace, and when the Sergeant departed he felt his time had not been wasted. For Casmir recalled the appearance of the missing man with photographic exactitude, and remembered that he wore a black felt hat, a leather belt with a large silver buckle, a waistcoat and a high pair of hobnailed boots, identical with those dragged from the slough, while, wherever he went, he was followed by his collie.

The draining of the slough proceeded slowly, and with little reward for the expenditure of money and labour. Then, simultaneously, two strokes of luck occurred: A perfect footprint was discovered in the neighbourhood of Casmir's corral, which corresponded with the heel of the left boot that had contained the soggy bundle, while from the bottom of the slough was recovered a mud-encrusted square of metal. Cleaned and polished Casmir recognized it as the buckle from the belt of the missing white man.

Then old Keewatin—God of the North Wind—unleashed his furies. A howling blizzard roared down from the Pole, obliterating the pines and cottonwoods with its stinging clouds of swirling snow, sealing the sloughs and ponds and filling the grey waters of Lesser Slave Lake with frozen slush. 'Breeds hauled out their fringed capotes of mooseskin, and Mounted Police their short buffalo coats, fur caps and moosehide mittens.

The silvery tinkle of sleigh bells echoed through the evergreens, and the whole country took on the garb of winter. As he stoked his sheet-iron stove Staff-Sergeant Anderson smiled grimly to himself. His next move, after freeze-up, would be to Edmonton to trace the man who had owned the silver buckle, the sovereign case and the nugget tie-pin.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRAIL OF THE SILVER BUCKLE

WHEN Constable Lowe rattled into Edmonton on the weekly stage from Athabasca Landing with his prisoner the future capital of Alberta was just emerging from its chrysalis and throwing off the primitive rule of the Fur Barons. On the banks of the swift-flowing Saskatchewan, where the old Hudson's Bay fort still reared its squat trading stores and grey stockades, bronzed Crees continued to barter their peltries with the factors as their scalp-hunting forefathers had done before them.

A straggling street fronted with ugly square stores, Chinese cafés, harness shops and livery stables—all smelling of newly sawn lumber—lined the heights above. Aloof and dignified stood the whitewashed building which housed the headquarters of "N" Division of the North West Mounted Police.

Gazing through one of the windows Lowe awaited the summons to the sanctum sanctorum of Inspector Strickland. A scarlet-coated guard had already reported his arrival and he was not entirely at his ease. After all, King's arrest had been made on the flimsiest thread of circumstantial evidence, and Lowe was inclined to think, on cool reflection, that the whole affair might prove a false alarm to the discomfiture of himself and everyone directly connected with the case.

As the door swung open he clicked his heels and saluted, acutely conscious of the penetrating eyes beneath the bushy eyebrows that seemed to probe his very soul.

"Well, Constable, what's this latest storm in the Lesser Slave Lake tea-cup?"

"Murder, sir."

"Let me see those despatches. What sort of evidence have you?" The words came in clipped, incisive sentences.

Spreading the papers before him with nervous fingers Inspector Strickland puckered his brow and commenced to read. Once or twice his facial muscles twitched impatiently and his frown deepened. Lowe felt clammy and uncomfortable.

"What kind of evidence do you call this?" Again the steely eyes were boring into his. "Draining the swamp, eh?" continued the O.C., gruffly. "Why, man—there isn't enough evidence here to arrest a chicken thief. Murder—pouff!"

There followed disgusted references to needles in haystacks, storms in tea-cups, and mysterious maledictions upon persons unnamed. Sergeant Anderson's popularity seemed for the moment to be decidedly below the zero mark.

"Constable!"

Lowe was backing slowly towards the door.

"Sir!"

"You'll report to Superintendent Worsley. He'll detail you to pursue inquiries around Edmonton and, by the way, you'd better write to Harry Bray, Dominion Brands Inspector at Medicine Hat, for information regarding that 'Diamond C' brand on King's horses."

"Very good, sir."

The guard was grinning as Lowe closed the door behind him. "Old man feeling kind of liverish this morning?" he suggested amiably.

"*Liverish*—I'll say so. Say—if anyone wants me . . . I'm burying my grandmother this afternoon, savvy?"

Lowe strode on down the hall and disappeared.

On the eighth day of his unsuccessful search for added evidence Lowe hesitated before a square-fronted building whose blatant sign announced it to be a harness shop and strode inside. It was one of those places where you could buy everything from a second-hand buggy to a pair of shoe-laces. Upon a three-legged stool squatted a seedy man with a bulbous nose and an alcoholic breath sewing a pair of leather traces. The Constable subconsciously watched the mechanical movement of his hand and noticed that he wore a sewing palm.

"What's that thing?" he inquired, remembering that the Indian lads had seen the missing man fixing his gun-stock with just such an article.

"A sewing palm," grinned the saddler. "Learned to use it when I was sailing 'fore the mast. Why?"

"Sell many of 'em?" inquired Lowe.

"No," he shook his head. "Last one I sold was last summer to a guy goin' up Peace River way, trappin'."

"Yes?"

"Sure. Said he was an Australian or something. A tall, dark

guy he was. Stuck around the joint here for a couple of days sewing up canvas panniers for his pack-train. Must've been some time in August."

Lowe felt a momentary thrill of encouragement. Again he visited store after store, endeavouring to ascertain if any of them had a record of selling a considerable quantity of canvas to a man named Leaman the previous August. But canvas was a staple article sold every day and none had any record of such a transaction. A further disappointment awaited him when he reached the barracks. The Dominion Brands Inspector reported no "Diamond C" brand registered in either Saskatchewan or Alberta.

As a last resort Lowe tried the bear trap as an identifying medium, realizing that no experienced trapper would lug a heavy bear trap around the country where there was lots of timber to make dead-falls. This time he met with more success. One of the traders at the new Hudson's Bay store on Jasper did recall such a sale the previous summer as the trap had long since been dead stock and he'd been glad to get rid of it. Turning over the pages of a grease-stained blotter he ran his fingers down the page.

"Here it is—August 14th. Edward Hayward. Ten yards of eight-ounce canvas, forty fox traps, one bear trap, and a list of grub. He paid by cheque. But you were looking for a man named Leaman!"

"You said he paid by cheque?"

"Sure." From a bundle of cancelled cheques in a drawer the clerk withdrew one for two hundred and fifty dollars on the Bank of Montréal at Nelson, British Columbia. It bore the signature of Edward Hayward. "Say—what's all the excitement?"

But Lowe, with the cheque in his tunic pocket, had left the store and was striding rapidly down Jasper Avenue towards the Flats. Rapidly he proceeded from one boarding-house to another, examining the registers and quizzing the proprietors. At the Edmonton Hotel his search ended. Under date of August 14th the names of Charles King and Edward Hayward leapt from the register. The proprietor remembered both men well. They had left together for Lesser Slave Lake, leaving their trunks in the basement for safe keeping.

A pleasurable sense of excitement possessed Lowe as he hurried to the barracks and obtained the ring and keys found on King's person when arrested. An hour later, with pounding pulses, he knelt before a trunk bearing the initials "C.K." His

next move, he realized, might be fraught with most significant consequences.

The first key wouldn't turn. The second was equally useless. The third shot back the bolt and displayed to his disappointed gaze a few old clothes, a letter addressed to King from Salt Lake City, and the stub of a railroad ticket from Macleod to Calgary dated August 13th. Another key fitted Hayward's trunk, disclosing some ship's discharge certificates, indicating he had been a sailor; a few clothes and a letter from a brother George in England. That night, after talking things over with the Constable, Inspector Strickland wrote to George Hayward in England, seeking particulars and a description of his brother Edward.

Things now commenced to move more swiftly. Lowe located the liveryman who had sold the "Diamond C" horses to a tall Englishman named Hayward the middle of the previous August. Then he came across an old German woman who had sold the yellow collie to a dark-haired Englishman—evidently Hayward—about the same time.

One blustery night a few weeks later a horse-drawn sleigh rattled up to the barracks and a snow-covered giant in buffalo coat, fur cap and moccasins leapt out. Disregarding the remonstrances of the guard, Staff-Sergeant Anderson brushed him casually aside and strode into Superintendent Worsley's office. For an hour the deep rumble of conversation echoed from within, then Andy stalked over to the Guard House for a short chat with Constable Lowe, drove across the frozen Saskatchewan to Strathcona and boarded a train for the wilds of British Columbia.

At Nelson he located Hayward's bank account and a trail which led him on snowshoes deep into the frozen backwoods from one lumber camp to another until, at last, he found a signature on a pay-roll which corresponded with the endorsement on the cheque. Mingling with mackinaw-clad lumbermen he came across some who remembered Hayward distinctly. Others recalled certain articles he'd possessed, including the sovereign case, the nugget tie-pin and the belt with the silver buckle.

Slowly and painstakingly Andy was beginning to fit together his jig-saw puzzle of scattered bits of evidence until it commenced to take on a comprehensive and sinister pattern. With no knowledge of each other's existence the two men had converged upon one another from totally different directions to meet aboard the Calgary-Edmonton train, become acquainted and form some sort of partnership. King was obviously broke, and Hayward had pur-

chased the horses, grub and outfit later found in King's possession, then they had struck north together along the Athabasca trail.

Still there remained the mystery of a motive. Desire for possession of this meagre trapping outfit could hardly have been sufficient to transform the quiet and inoffensive King—who, according to Salt Lake City authorities, bore a first-class reputation—into a murderous maniac with the nerve to kill his partner, burn his body in the camp-fire, and remain coolly in the vicinity for two nights afterwards.

As Andy clambered aboard a train, his snowshoes beneath his arm, deep in the forested wilds of British Columbia, a bronzed, middle-aged man with tattooed wrists and the tang of the salt sea about him was shown into Inspector Strickland's office and introduced himself as George Hayward. Grasping the officer's hand in an iron clasp he seated himself and got right down to business. Pulling a chubby briar pipe from his pocket he proceeded to whittle a plug of black tobacco.

"Do you mind if I smoke, sir?" he inquired. "I find that a pull at the weed sort of refreshes my memory, and I've a bit of a yarn I want to tell you."

"Certainly, Mr. Hayward, certainly. By all means light up. I'm anxious to hear anything you've got to say."

"Do you believe in dreams, sir?"

"Well—not exactly, but go ahead with your story."

"I'm a sailor, Mr. Strickland, as you've probably noticed, and I suppose, like most seafaring men, I'm sort of superstitious. It's the sea—it does that to every mother's son of us—but you can take my yarn for what it's worth."

In a slow, matter-of-fact voice George Hayward told of a strange dream that had disturbed his sleep the previous September. He'd found himself in a country interspersed with cottonwood trees and poplar bluffs, and then again with gloomy pines and swift-flowing rivers. The picture was clear-cut as crystal. Then he'd seen two mounted figures leading pack-horses ride round a slough, past some Indian tepees, make camp and lie down to sleep. The moon shone brightly on their faces and he recognized one as his brother Edward. Suddenly the other figure had emerged stealthily from his blankets, seized a gun, pointed it at the recumbent form of his brother and fired twice.

"The picture was so vivid," exclaimed George Hayward, "that I awakened trembling all over, and bathed in perspiration, expecting to find the murderer right beside me. Going over to

a drawer I got out a letter I'd received not long before from Ed and read over again the lines in which he said he was leaving for Peace River."

Slipping his hand into his pocket he brought out a worn newspaper clipping and pushed it across the desk. "Read that, sir. You see, I happened to mention this dream of mine over at the Cross Keys, a little pub I used to drop into now and then, and it was printed in the local paper. You'll see by the date that my dream occurred on the very night my brother appears to have been murdered."

Amazement shone plainly on the face of the Inspector. "Of course, Mr. Hayward, you realize this story could hardly be expected to influence a Judge or jury. But how would you like to take a run out to Fort Saskatchewan and see if you can identify the subject of this most unusual dream?"

"Fine, sir."

A couple of hours later they stood within the stone walls of the Fort, watching a line-up of prisoners file past. Suddenly Hayward caught the officer's arm in a steely grip and pointed. "That's him!" he cried, trembling with excitement. "The man I saw in my dream." His finger pointed accusingly at Charlie King, whom he now saw for the first time in his life.

When Charlie King stood before the bewigged Judge and a jury of weatherbeaten frontiersmen, Andy had woven a web from the bits of bone, the broken needle and the silver buckle which had brought eighty witnesses from as far apart as the wilds of British Columbia, the ice-clad mountains of Alaska, the torrid plains of Utah, the frozen forests of the Athabasca, and even from far-off England.

Slowly the story was told of how King and Hayward, meeting on the Calgary-Edmonton train, had gone north together. Mistoos recalled how his suspicions had been aroused by the cattle bawling beside the camp-fire. Johnny Mistoos, his son, told of hearing two shots in the night and of visiting the white man's camp next day to find the "tall one" gone. George Hayward identified the sovereign case, the nugget tie-pin and the watch-chain as his brother's.

King paled slightly as Sergeant Anderson sauntered into the witness-box and with his customary inscrutable half-smile proceeded to deliver one telling blow upon another. The bones found in the fireplace had been certified by a pathologist as parts

of a human skull. It had also been proven that the horses, traps and equipment found in King's possession when arrested had been purchased by the Englishman.

Still the murder lacked a motive, and it seemed obvious that the defence would contend that King had parted company with Hayward after purchasing his outfit, and that Hayward was still alive somewhere in the Northern wilderness.

"I've just one more witness," added the Sergeant.

A buzz of excited speculation swept the Court-room. The Defence Attorney, already on his feet with a sheaf of papers in his hand, looked nonplussed. What was the Sergeant keeping up his sleeve?

The prisoner's face turned livid as the door opened and the Sergeant ushered an Indian woman into the witness-box. With shawl draped over her face and downcast eyes she told her story. She'd visited the camp of the two whites the night that Hayward had disappeared with the object of selling a pair of moccasins. She admitted the time was after midnight, and that she had made her way surreptitiously through the willows.

Suddenly the men had started to quarrel. Frightened, she'd plunged back into the bush and a gun had exploded twice behind her. She thought she'd heard one of the men cry out. When the red-coat had visited the reserve she'd become afraid lest she would be held responsible for the killing she was certain had taken place, and so her brothers had watched the Sergeant's movements from the cover of the willows.

No defence could break down the wall of evidence built up by the Sergeant from the twin pieces of broken needle, and when King expiated his crime the Outside world learned again that there was still a law beyond the frontier.

From a grateful Government Mistoos and his braves were suitably rewarded; but Sergeant Anderson's only reward was the satisfaction of another duty well performed.

CHAPTER X
THE MEDICINE MURDERS

THAT the rule of the Fur Lords was fast approaching its end was becoming increasingly obvious, not only in the wilds of Athabasca, but also among the deep spruce forests of Keewatin, a thousand miles to the eastward. Slowly, but with remorseless certainty, the scarlet tentacles of the North West Mounted Police were penetrating deeper and deeper into the wilderness.

At lonely Fullerton and rock-bound Churchill there had arisen the yellow-painted barracks of the Force, and Major Moodie now spoke in a voice of authority to the fur factors who had so long ruled the land. At Norway House, ancient stronghold of the Hudson's Bay Company near the head of Lake Winnipeg, Sergeant D. B. Smith was facing problems of his own in bringing the white man's law to the conical lodges of nomad Crees and pagan Saulteaux, ruled from time immemorial by the witchcraft and black magic of their medicine men.

Between Lake Winnipeg and Hudson Bay there roamed some seven thousand primitive redskins, few of whom had ever seen a white man apart from the factors of the Company. And like their coppery cousins, the roving Chipewyans and Dog-Ribs of the Athabasca, they, too, acknowledged a shadowy allegiance to an almost mythical *Gitchee Okemow* across the Great Water, though the more visible and concrete display of authority had always been vested in the chief factors whom they saw on their occasional visits to Norway House when manning the annual fur brigades.

Being the focal point for the vast, undefined District of Keewatin it was only natural that, each Christmas, fur traders and Indians from the surrounding forests should converge upon this oasis in the wilderness to eat, drink and make merry. Thus, on Christmas Eve, 1906, I found myself assisting my buckskin-clad colleagues in welcoming the factors as they careened in to the courtyard in their dog-drawn carriages. First Henry McLeod from Cross Lake, then Ashton Alston from Oxford House, Donald Flett, the mail courier from Icelandic River, and finally Big Bill



[Philip Gaisell]

A SAULTEAUX HUNTER



KIN OF SAPWASI

[Philip Godsell

Campbell from his fort at Island Lake, in the land of the pagan Saulteaux.

That night as we gathered around the crackling wood-stove in the Bachelors' Hall, and glass and bottle passed from hand to hand, these bronzed sons of the Silent Places made up for their enforced isolation with jovial interchange of yarns and boisterous revelry. From the nearby Council House came the cries and whoops of excited Indians, the thud, thud of moccasined feet and the squeaky strains of ancient fiddles—sure sign that the redmen, too, were doing their share of celebrating.

"Well, Mac"—Campbell turned with twinkling eyes to the granite-faced McLeod—"ye're getting kind o' soft, eh, Henry? Hear ye had tae get yer son Louis tae drive ye in this year."

"Soft be damned," roared the incensed Highlander, staggering belligerently to his feet. "Ony time that . . ."

At that moment the door swung open. Into the hall strode the tall, attenuated form of Sergeant "Daisy" Smith, half-hidden in a cloud of frosty vapour. Loosening the scarlet tassels of his caribou-skin parki he brushed the frost crystals from his eyes. "So," he grinned, "you're celebrating already, eh?"

"Sure." Waving a glass in his hand, and spilling the amber contents all around him, McLeod lurched across the room. "Here, Sergeant, hae a drink—it'll warm the cockles o' yer heart."

Tossing down his drink the Sergeant drew the back of his hand across his long, drooping, straw-coloured moustache and soon was discussing the topics of trail and trap-line. But beneath his outward display of jocularly there was evidently something on his mind. At last he drew Campbell to one side. "Say, Bill," he demanded, "what's this I hear about a medicine murder out Sandy Lake way?"

The factor looked apprehensively around him. "Say, Godsell," he inquired, "can we use your room?"

"Sure," I said, "go to it."

It was some time ere they emerged. Campbell seemed somewhat preoccupied and worried. The Sergeant's grim lips and frosted eyes betokened trouble. Picking up his dog-whip and bidding the boys good night he passed outside, and a few minutes later we heard him driving his dogs towards the barracks.

It was a weird story that factor Campbell had unfolded in that little room of mine in the Bachelors' Hall; a story of Indian

superstition and the ruthless rule of aboriginal witch-doctors.

Late that fall, just as the leaves were turning, the *Miquamapin*, or Red Sucker band of the Saulteaux tribe, had obtained their usual fur debts from him at Island Lake, loaded up their yellow birchbarks and paddled east towards their hunting grounds at Sandy Lake.

On the journey, Sapwaste, daughter-in-law of Pecequan, the seventy-year-old medicine man who ruled the band, had been taken ill. The bright-eyed, cinnamon-cheeked young squaw was a general favourite among the band, her comely looks and flashing smile having endeared her to young and old alike. Arriving at Sandy Lake they had erected their birchbark wigwams deep in the green spruce woods and laid the sick girl upon a fragrant couch of balsam boughs.

At first they thought she would recover. But Sapwaste remained singularly quiet for one usually so merry, and her silvery laughter ceased to enliven the evenings around the lodge fires. Instead she lapsed into delirium and strange words came tumbling from her lips. At times she fought and struggled with peculiar strength and ferocity, causing Pecequan to ponder deeply, his dark orbs fixed upon the glowing embers of the fire. For days he howled and shouted and rattled his *she-she-quon* to drive out the evil spirits. Still she raved on in delirium.

Steeped in ancient tribal superstitions, Pecequan decided to consult his manitous. Retiring to a glade in the forest he cut a number of long, stout willow poles and traced a circle six feet in diameter upon the ground. Driving the heavier ends into the earth around the circle he tied the poles overhead with babiche lines, bound circular hoops to the uprights with strips of rawhide to make the framework rigid, then covered the medicine lodge with mooseskins.

Slowly, hesitatingly, with fear-filled eyes the villagers gathered in the shadow of the encircling pines, their coppery bodies thin and emaciated since the fear that Sapwaste would be transformed into a cannibal Weetigo and devour all those about her had kept them from the hunting trail. Clutching their papooses to their breasts squaws covered their faces with their shawls.

Attired in all the barbaric panoply of his priestcraft Pecequan emerged from the shadows of the forest, and Niska, his assistant, secured his sinewy hands and feet with rawhide lines and assisted him into his forest tabernacle. Soon the Song of the Mida arose in quavering cadence upon the air, the voice of the medicine

man keeping time to the pulsating rhythm of the throbbing tom-tom without. Louder and louder rose the singing, and louder still the throbbing accompaniment until the surrounding woods seemed filled with eerie sounds and noises. Suddenly the beehive-like conjuring lodge swayed drunkenly about as though galvanized with life. From overhead came a sound like rushing wind. Then, as the tom-tom reached a vibrating crescendo, all sound and movement ceased and Pecequan could be heard in converse with his manitous.

Again Niska pounded his tom-tom; again that rushing sound, and again the lodge swayed drunkenly about. Silence . . . then, dimly, as though from the darkening sky, came the squeaky sounds of an animal voice. Questions were apparently asked and answered in some unknown tongue until the spirit voice died away and Pecequan, bathed in perspiration and freed of his bonds, staggered out into the open. A silence pregnant with fear fell over the aboriginal audience as the medicine man made known the word of the manitous. Sapwaste had become a Weetigo—a cannibal. She was possessed of evil spirits. She must die!¹

Next morning Pecequan and his brother, Chief Mistainnew, took over the lodge of the sick girl, ejected the other occupants and selected two young hunters, named by the traders Angus Rae and Norman Fiddler, to fill the role of executioners. Each was to take his place on opposite sides of Sapwaste's lodge, hold the cord that dangled through holes in the bark cover and, when the painted medicine drum throbbed within, they were to pull with all their might. Soon the drum boomed out its warning, the executioners did as they were bid, and, as the menacing notes faded, dropped the line as though it was a thing accursed and rushed to their respective wigwams. Soon afterwards a bundle swathed in a rabbit-skin robe was carried into the leafless forest and buried in a shallow grave. Then, as the slat-ribbed sleigh dogs howled out a requiem for the repose of Sapwaste's soul, a long, sharp stake was driven through the body and rocks piled high above the spot lest the *Mutchee Manitouwuk*—the evil spirits—should return and raise it back to life.

Seizing their muzzle loaders the dark-visaged hunters sent volley after volley echoing amongst the sentinel pines to drive off

¹ This method of communing with the spirits is still practised by the medicine men of the Cree, Saulteaux and other Algonquin tribes in an attempt to foretell the future. Few white men, however, know about it as these aboriginal rites are invariably kept secret. Twice the writer has witnessed the ceremony of the conjuring lodge.—P.H.G.

lurking spirits; a torch was applied to the execution lodge and, embarking in their birchbarks, all hastened from the haunted spot.

When he reached the log barracks at the Crooked Turn Sergeant Smith turned Campbell's tragic story over in his mind. Three years had elapsed since he had opened up the Norway House detachment as a connecting link between the Outside and Major Moodie's lonely detachments around the storm-tossed shores of Hudson Bay, and his recently established authority amongst the coppery denizens of the forests would amount to naught if he failed to take prompt and effective action.

Picking up a sheet of paper he addressed it to Commissioner Bowen Perry at Regina and chewed meditatively at the end of his pen. In the saddle, or on the trail, the tall, rawboned policeman was quite at home, but writing reports was not in his line at all and he despised the necessity for doing so. At last the report was completed and he surveyed the result with doubtful satisfaction. This time to-morrow, he reflected, it would be speeding by dog-team over the frozen surface of Lake Winnipeg towards Headquarters at Regina.

As the chill grey light of dawn crept into the sky next morning a shadowy figure emerged from the barracks, drove his dog-team across the icy Nelson and plunged into the violet shadows of the snow-filled forest. Ahead, on hissing snowshoes, sped a lithe, mahogany-faced Cree, breaking trail. Constable O'Neill was on his way to Island Lake to gather evidence!

The short, cold, dazzling days slipped swiftly by. January gave place to the Eagle Moon. Once in a while a barking crow cawed among the spiked tops of the purple pines. Blinding blizzards swept Keewatin from end to end, piling drift upon drift. So cold was it that fur-bearing animals remained in their dens and redskin hunters hugged their lodge fires. Then, one day, as frigid blasts whipped the loose snow into whirling coils of whiteness a ragged skin-clad runner on up-curved snowshoes appeared at the barracks and handed the Sergeant a letter stained with caribou grease and smelling of the smoke of camp-fires. It was from O'Neill at Island Lake, and not only confirmed his worst fears but hinted at some twenty other aboriginal executions. Pecequan's Red Sucker band, it seemed, were outlawed by the surrounding tribes who looked with horror on their barbarous practices and witchcraft.

When Donald Flett arrived with the mail from Icelandic River he brought a reply from the Commissioner. Reading it by the yellow light of a coal-oil lamp the Sergeant hurried over to the Guard Room and returned with a stocky, square-jawed Constable of twenty-two. "Cashman," he remarked in his rasping voice, "I've got a little job for you. Remember that story Campbell was telling about a murder at Sandy Lake last fall?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, the Commissioner's decided it's about time we were putting an end to the rule of these damned witch-doctors, and insists we make an example of these fellows at Sandy Lake. O'Neill reports from Sandy Lake that things are serious and that Pcequan and his gang have at least twenty murders on their hands. You'll make arrangements to leave with three dog-teams, pick up O'Neill at Island Lake, proceed to the Saulteaux camp, arrest the chief and medicine man, round up your witnesses and bring the whole caboodle here for trial. Understand!"

Cashman's face had become grim, but there was a sparkle in his eyes. He nodded.

"These Injuns," continued the Sergeant, "are a damned tough crowd, the toughest in Keewatin; all pagans, and outlawed by the other tribes. Many of 'em have never seen a white man except these Hudson's Bay traders, so you'll have to be firm and tactful. Remember, Cashman, there's to be no trouble—and you must *not* return without your prisoners. And," he added significantly, "if you let me down—God help you!"

For the next two days Cashman was busy getting together frozen fish for dog-feed, bannock and provisions, fixing toboggans and harness, selecting sleigh dogs and rounding up his men. Jimmie Kirkness, a half-breed who had traded amongst these same Saulteaux and spoke their lingo, he hired as guide, and two of the best half-breed travellers in the country—Tommy Garson and Moses Gore—to drive the dog-teams.

Clad in fringed buckskin capotes, fringed leggings of blue cloth, and moccasins, Cashman and his swarthy runners drove their dogs down on to the frozen Nelson while the stars still twinkled in the sky and, following the trail of Jimmie's snowshoes, were soon swallowed up in the ebony darkness of the forest.

The snow was deep, the going heavy, and the trail unbroken. Day after day the little band toiled on creaking snowshoes through the mounting drifts, their faces ripped and seared by biting blizzards that came roaring down from the Pole; glad when night

came to stretch their pained limbs on soft and fragrant spruce boughs before the roaring camp-fire. Thawing their frozen beans and bannock before the red-tongued flames they would throw a couple of half-thawed whitefish to each of their hungry huskies, wolf their meal before it could freeze upon their plates, roll themselves into their rabbit-skin robes, and sink into blissful forgetfulness of swollen limbs and raw and aching feet.

Turn about, they kindled the camp-fire at three o'clock each morning, the woods about them blue and cold and ghostly in their awesome silence. By five, toboggans were loaded and lashed, dogs harnessed, and they had hit the trail once more, chilled with the piercing cold of early dawn that caused the trees about them to burst asunder with reports like rifle shots.

On the eighth day out from Norway House the grey stockade and snow-covered roofs of the fort at Island Lake arose from the solitary world of whiteness, and as the dogs broke into a gallop, sweeping with jangling bells across the ice, the red ensign of the fur company crawled slowly up the flag-pole to flutter out its greeting.

In the red-painted gateway appeared the burly, skin-clad form of Big Bill Campbell with O'Neill beside him.

"Glad to see you," the factor's hearty greeting boomed out over the snow. "Never mind your dogs, boys. Johnny here'll unhitch them. I've got fish thawing for them right now."

"Fish thawing!" There was surprise in Cashman's voice.

"Sure," Campbell chuckled. "Got word this morning you were coming. The Indians have been watching for you all day. Moccasin telegraph, you know."

For two days they rested and luxuriated in the warmth thrown out by the crackling Carron stove, dined sumptuously on roasted moose meat and white bread, gave extra feed to the dogs, and prepared to hit the trail once more.

As the huskies, their tails curved in feathery plumes above their backs, swept with barks of glee down the snowy rocks towards the ice Cashman lingered for a last word with the factor.

"Be careful," Campbell warned him. "Look out for those damned Saulteaux and don't take any chances—they're bad actors."

A quick handclasp and Cashman raced in pursuit of the fast-disappearing teams.

The snow was soft and heavy and the forest trails little better than the runways of the rabbits and foxes that furnished the only

signs of life save for a couple of gaunt grey wolves that trailed them tirelessly, ransacking each camp after they left it in search of scraps to satisfy their ravenous hunger.

Day after day they crunched eastward over the loose drifts, penetrating deeper and deeper into the goblin-haunted hunting grounds of the outlaw Saulteaux. At last their toboggans broke the virgin whiteness of still another spruce-walled lake.

"Sandy Lake! *Nergo Sarkayikan!*" grunted Kirkness gruffly.

In vain their eyes searched the dark shore-line for signs of Indian life. Not a thing was to be seen. Nowhere was there any sign of an encampment. No finger of wood-smoke stained the coppery sky.

That night they kindled their camp-fire deep in the woods lest its star-like twinkle be observed by prying eyes. Then, as the flames roared upwards, painting the tree-trunks a brilliant scarlet and the snow a rosy pink, Kirkness slipped on his snowshoes and disappeared into the wall of velvet darkness. A few minutes later Moses Gore crunched in his wake.

O'Neill, wrapped in his rabbit-skin robe, his feet towards the fire, was puffing contemplatively upon his pipe, gazing at the twinkling stars that winked coldly through the spiked tops of the spectral pines, when the swish, swish of snowshoes smote his ears. From out of the darkness emerged the buckskin-coated form of Jimmie Kirkness. Sticking his snowshoes tail-first in the snow he warmed his hands before the fire. "Nary a sign of a soul," he growled. "I must have hiked five miles along the shore to the eastward."

An hour passed, then Moses Gore came crunching out of the woods and threw a log on the smouldering embers, sending a cascade of glittering sparks far up among the snow-laden branches. His coppery face registered subdued excitement.

"*Sibwateowuk!*" he announced emphatically. "They've beat it! Pulled out, bag and baggage, three days ago. Found their fall camp, then came upon this other one. Sure left in an all-fired hurry, too. There's pots and pans and other junk scattered around in all their lodges."

Cashman voiced his deep disgust. "Moccasin telegraph again," he muttered thickly. "Sure beats me how news travels through the bush. No one ahead of us . . . we've travelled fast and still they've got wise we're on their trail and vamoosed. Guess we'd better hit the hay."

A crimson sun had just poured its scarlet rays over the ebony rim of the forest as they drove into the deserted village. The trail of many snowshoes led to the south-west. Whipping up their dogs they followed in the wake of the retreating Saulteaux.

Day after day they swung along in pursuit, observing the significant fact that now and then individual snowshoe tracks led off from the main trail into the bush. As they neared Deer Lake the main trail freshened and they noticed, with some foreboding, the ominous prints of fresh snowshoe tracks curving in from the forest—all leading in the direction in which Pecequan's band were travelling. Messengers and signal smokes had called for reinforcements. Now these were converging in from all outlying camps. Evidently Pecequan was not disposed to surrender his rule without a struggle.

"*Marche!*" Cashman's lips set in a grim line as he cracked his heavy caribou-hide whip over the pointed ears of a refractory huskie.

All that day tracks continued to freshen until, late in the afternoon, as they rounded a pine-clad point of rock, small clumps of spruce boughs appeared on the ice before them. Net holes! Leaping into their collars the dogs gave tongue in their excitement. Swiftly they hauled the careening toboggans along the icy trail until, sweeping swiftly around a forested bend, they saw, across the frozen bay, the encampment of the outlaw Saulteaux—a score of squat bark wigwams nestling in the snowy embrace of the frosted pines. Rapid movements among the lodges, the angry barking of dogs, and the clamorous cries of squaws and children appraised them that their presence had become known. With pounding hearts they moved swiftly down upon the camp. Then, above the frantic cries and the wolf-like snarling of the huskies, there boomed across the ice the menacing reverberations of the medicine drum.

CHAPTER XI
REDCOAT AND REDSKIN

'As the teams came to a clamorous halt at the foot of the snow-covered bank beneath the village, Constable Cashman shot swift, curt orders at Moses Gore and Tommy Garson to guard the toboggans, then signed to Kirkness and O'Neill to follow. Scaling the steep bank they found themselves amid a seething horde of tall, wiry forms, looking into a sea of scowling, angry faces and piercing, serpent-like eyes. From the security of their lodge doors leathery-faced squaws raised shrill voices in vituperative abuse and spat at them as they strode grimly by.

The camp was a far larger one than Cashman had anticipated. It was now plainly evident that Pecequan had sent a call to all neighbouring camps for his coppery followers to rally to his aid. There were far more hawk-nosed, mahogany-faced bucks around than he had thought to find in a winter camp of forest Indians.

That the Saulteaux were in a belligerent and ugly mood was obvious. Kirkness, who knew them well and shared their blood, was nervous. The whole atmosphere was menacing in the extreme and charged with human dynamite that needed but a spark of tactlessness to ignite it. And, as Cashman gazed into those mysterious, smouldering eyes and hate-contorted visages, he realized that Campbell's warning had been only too well founded. To these pagan redskins the prestige of the red-coated *Shimarganishuk* meant absolutely nothing. They were but two lone whites amidst a horde of primitive Saulteaux to whom murder was a mere trifle.

With set lips he lifted the flap and dived into the smoke-filled interior of a long oval wigwam into which the natives were crowding from all sides. Again he gazed at the motley concourse around him. Separated by the gulf of centuries, Stone Age and Iron Age faced each other with unrelenting purpose. Disregarding the menace of the shining muskets gripped tight in coppery fingers Cashman delivered his message. It was short, simple and to the point. The Great White Father had heard of the killing of Sap-waste. He had heard of other killings, too. Those responsible must accompany his red-coated servants, the *Shimarganishuk*, back to the white man's fort at Norway House!

Threescore pairs of beady eyes gazed unwinkingly at Jimmie Kirkness as he interpreted the words into the sonorous Saukteaux. Puffing slowly and deliberately upon his pipe Chief Mistainnew waited until he was through, then, dropping his blanket, rose to his full height and fixed his sombre eyes upon the policeman.

"What has the Great White Father—the *Gitchee Okemow* across the Great Water—to do with the children of the *Miquamapinuk*?" he demanded truculently, his coppery countenance creased into lines of anger. "This is the country of the *Ansinabeg*—wherein they know no laws save those of their own making. The *Shimarganishuk* wish to take me away and put me in their Stone House. Huh! I have here threescore young men who do not desire that I should go. Outside are many more. Each, in his hand, holds a loaded gun. I have but to say the word and they will kill you and those half-breed dogs, who lick your feet, right where you stand, and cast your bodies to the sleigh dogs."

A glance at the lowering faces about him convinced Cashman that it was far from being an empty threat. Their position was one of the utmost difficulty and danger. Yet, if they failed to fulfil the duty assigned to them the situation would be serious. Indian character being what it was the authority and prestige of the Mounted Police would suffer a blow that would reverberate through the forests from Winnipeg to Hudson Bay.

For two hours that epic battle of wits and wills was fought in the flickering red firelight of that smoky lodge in the heart of the forested fastnesses of Keewatin. Black witchcraft and paganism, whose roots reached back to the dim ages, were arrayed against the forces of the white man's law and civilization; forces that must have seemed absurdly weak to those superstitious fanatics whose coppery fingers toyed nervously with the triggers of their loaded muskets. How simple it would be to indulge their racial hatred and destroy at one fell swoop these intruding white dogs who, by virtue of their scarlet coats, felt empowered to stalk into the heart of the hunting grounds of the unwhipped *Ansinabeg* and browbeat their chiefs and elders.

Yet, from that pagan council, Cashman and O'Neill retired triumphant. Over aboriginal hatred and superstition, logic, tact and firmness won the day. Tossing his raven locks from his eyes Chief Mistainnew heaved a guttural sigh and held his wrists before him in token of surrender.

"*Mi'way*, white man, put those irons on my wrists. I am old

and have not long to live. Many winters have left their snows upon my hair and I do not desire to bring trouble on my people. I will go with you—so will my brother, Pecequan. You may do with us as you will. You are a brave young man. You look right into my eyes when you speak, as one true man should always look at another. *Mi'way*—I have spoken! ”

Surrounded by a muttering horde of lynx-eyed *Saulteaux* they singled out Sapwaste's executioners, Angus Rae and Norman Fiddler, and made hurried but unostentatious preparations for departure. Knowing Indian nature as they did they realized that any moment might bring about a complete reversal of feeling, and the prisoners were spared the humiliation of being handcuffed lest this indignity should cause the smouldering fires of hatred to burst into consuming flame.

Following Kirkness down on to the ice Pecequan and Mistainnew slipped on their snub-nosed snowshoes and strode ahead while, behind them, arose the clamour of wailing squaws and barking dogs. Cashman cracked his whip. Leaping into their collars the huskies fell into line and the long snake-like cavalcade wormed its way across the frozen bay, now bathed blood-red by the rays of the dying sun, until the camp was lost to sight.

Until far into the night they crunched on through the em-purpled darkness, anxious to place as great a distance as possible 'twixt themselves and the outlaw village lest, in their excitement, some hot-headed young bucks might trail them and attempt to effect a rescue.

At last they made camp and, turn about, stood guard over the slumbering prisoners. A large silvery moon shone through the dark *filigree of the forest* as O'Neill took up his lonely vigil, lighting the heavily-lined face of the sleeping chief.

Somewhere in the darkness an owl hooted mournfully and a faint breeze rustled the tree-tops. Some unseen presence seemed to be abroad and a feeling of deep sympathy crept into the heart of the youthful Mountie. After all, these were pagan Indians to whom the country had belonged until the white man, with the egotism of his race, stepped in and calmly appropriated it without as much as a by-your-leave. Murder could not, of course, be condoned, yet these natives had their own strange codes of law and honesty and uprightness, codes to which they adhered more conscientiously than does the white man, who has one law for the rich and another for the poor. There were times when the destruction of a demented person was necessary to the safety of the

band. Where was one to draw the line? There had been a certain nobility, too, in the manner of the old man's surrender. He remembered now the kindly pat the old chief had given him on the shoulder when he'd insisted that no harm was to come to the young *Shimarganishuk* as hot-headed bucks had gathered threateningly around. After all, the white man's laws, like his commerce, worked often in strange and unfathomable ways.

Tired, footsore and grimy from the smoke of many camp-fires, the patrol pushed at last through the stockade of lonely Island Lake. With two hundred miles to go, the trails breaking under the increasing heat of the hot spring sun, and the surface of lake and river ankle-deep in freezing slush, they accepted Bill Campbell's invitation to remain till open water and journey on to Norway House with the annual York boat brigade.

It was July when the tawny crews of the four red-painted York boats dipped their eighteen-foot sweeps into the azure waters of Island Lake to the thunderous discharge of hundreds of muskets in the hands of the Indians who lined the bank. Running rapids, sailing before boisterous breezes, hauling the unwieldy boats by main strength over mosquito-infested portages; camping at night on the banks of some tranquil river or on the shores of some island-dotted lake, the brigade slowly neared its destination until, at last, the whitewashed walls and tall flag-pole of Norway House were reflected in the pellucid depths of Playgreen Lake.

Cashman handed his prisoners over to Sergeant Smith at the Crooked Turn, where they were promptly placed in the Guard House. Quickly the machinery of the white man's law snapped into action. Anxious to make an example of the prisoners and for ever break the baleful powers of the aboriginal medicine men, Ottawa had decided to hold the trial at Norway House in the heart of the Indian country so that the redmen would be properly impressed. Meanwhile arrangements were made with the Hudson's Bay Company to turn over for the trial the ancient Council House wherein Sir George Simpson, the Little Emperor of Rupert's Land, had, in days gone by, been wont to hold council with his fur factors.

On the day Commissioner Perry and his party were due to arrive at Warren's Landing aboard the steamer, Sergeant Smith and Cashman left by canoe to meet them. Down at the fort O'Neill was making last-minute preparations for the trial, while, at the barracks, the prisoners were taking their daily exercise

under the charge of a young recruit. Suddenly he noticed that Pecequan was missing.

"*Tante* Pecequan?" He turned to Mistainnnew.

"Dunno!" grunted the Indian gruffly.

"Quick!" he yelled to some passing half-breeds. "Search the woods—Pecequan's disappeared!"

Scattering in all directions they searched the bush, but not a sign of the missing medicine man was anywhere to be seen.

The sun had already dropped behind the serrated tops of the pines when O'Neill came hurrying up from the fort, having heard from Caroline Robertson of the prisoner's escape. Through the forbidding forest, dark and mysterious with approaching night, they stumbled over springy moss and through clutching muskeg, their ears filled with the incessant droning of mosquitoes. Suddenly O'Neill felt a convulsive clasp upon his arm.

"Wh-what's that?" His companion's fear-filled voice was husky.

"What? *Where?*"

"There—hanging from the branch of that tree ahead!" The Constable pointed to a dark object silhouetted against the tracery of gold and indigo—an object that swayed eerily in the wind.

Stumbling through the muskeg they gazed in awe-struck silence at the sight before them. From the bough of a gnarled old pine hung the body of Pecequan, his bright *L'Assumption* belt knotted tightly about his neck. He had gone to meet the manitou of the Saulteaux—but he had chosen his own time and place and had not died shamefully at the hands of these *Wapiskuweasuk*—those paleface usurpers whom he hated and despised!

A few days later Mistainnnew stoically faced his accusers in the historic old Council House. Behind a large spruce table covered with a Union Jack sat the formidable figure of Commissioner Perry. Beside him were lawyers in wigs and gowns, while on either side of the chieftain stood the red-coated escort, their buttons glinting in the slanting rays of the summer sun. Opposite were the jury: white-collared clerks of the fur company, moccasined traders and half-breed dog-drivers, while priests, missionaries and dark-visaged Crees from distant lakes and rivers filled the balance of the hall.

Slowly the story of the execution of Sapwaste was unfolded. Then, while the jury retired, the chief leaned back and stared stolidly at the beams above. In solemn silence the foreman of the jury announced their verdict: "Murder!" The chief rose

to his feet, a commanding figure in his loose capote and wide multi-coloured *L'Assumption* sash knotted about his waist. With a characteristic flick of his long black locks his eyes met those of the White Chief whose word would determine his fate. Unmoved, he listened as the Judge placed the black cap upon his head and Jimmie Kirkness interpreted the sentence. He must die at the end of a hangman's rope! The rope that would, according to Indian superstition, for ever prevent him entering the red man's Happy Hunting Grounds.

A few days later he was on his way across Lake Winnipeg to the Stone House of the whites. But the dread sentence was not carried out. A petition from the traders, missionaries and priests at Norway House received the favourable consideration of the Minister of Justice and Mistainnnew's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Unaccustomed to the cramping environment of prison life the once virile son of the forest pined slowly away until, one morning, the emaciated body of the old chief was found by a warden stretched out on his iron cot. Mistainnnew's soul had fled the stone walls of Stony Mountain Penitentiary for the Happy Hunting Grounds of his forefathers.

Thus, with the passing of the chief and his brother the aboriginal rule of the witch-doctors was for ever broken. And all because two young policemen, facing a horde of relentless redskins in a smoky wigwam beside the rocky shores of Deer Lake, didn't know when they were beaten!

NOTE: I was at Norway House when Constable O'Neill left for Island Lake. A few days later I departed on snowshoes for the distant outpost of Pepekwootoe in the heart of the Cree hunting grounds adjoining the Sandy Lake country of Pecequan's Saulteaux braves. From the lips of the Crees I heard the story of the patrol into the Deer Lake camp and the capture of the chief and medicine man. The following summer, *en route* to Norway House with the God's Lake fur brigade, I was only a few days behind the brigade carrying the Mounted Police and their prisoners, whose tracks we saw upon the portages. Arriving at Norway House I again heard the entire story from Cashman and O'Neill, and from their dog-runners as well. Only a couple of days before his escape I visited Pecequan and the other natives at the barracks and, later, was present at Chief Mistainnnew's trial.—P.H.G.

CHAPTER XII

THE LOST PATROL

BETWEEN the time of Charlie Klengenberg's piratical voyage to ice-girt Woolaston Land and Stefansson's re-discovery of the "Blonde" Eskimos, sweeping changes had taken place in the Western Arctic. The whaling fleet was no more. It had received its *coup de grâce* when the fair sex had finally refused to encircle their forms in whalebone girders, and with the discovery of a substitute for "headbone", as the whalers termed that article, which had reduced the price from five dollars to forty cents a pound. Often now a year and more would elapse without a single vessel calling in at Herschel Island, and this remnant of an ancient glacier had reverted to its austere and awful isolation.

Still, the Mounted Police found plenty to occupy their time checking up on the Indian and Eskimo camps, guarding the health of the natives and making their regular patrols. Added to this, each winter, was the carrying of mail and reports to and fro on the arduous thousand-mile return hike between Dawson and Fort McPherson. Since Sergeant Fitzgerald organized this patrol when he first went North it had continued to operate with the regularity of clockwork.

To hard-bitten Northerners, who realized to the full the underlying dangers that lurked among the saw-toothed summits and depthless canyons of this austere and exacting trail, it had become something of an Arctic Marathon, and the time taken by various members of the Force to make the journey had become a fruitful source of camp-fire argument and speculation. The shorter the time the greater the laurels won by those on this particular patrol.

To Corporal W. J. Dempster, tall, wiry, and every inch an athlete, had gone the Northland's acclaim as being, *par excellence*, the finest and fastest runner in the land. From 1907 to 1910 he had continued to make this difficult and dangerous journey with clock-like precision until the mere fact of having made this patrol with Dempster had become the hall-mark of distinction and efficiency upon the trail. Only those who, like himself, had attained the pink of physical condition would he take with him, and while he was exacting and inexorable upon the trail his men

were never known to complain. Though he drove both men and dogs hard he never failed to bring them back in perfect shape. He had, in fact, become a master of the North, tireless as a machine—steady and firm as the Rock of Gibraltar itself.

For years a friendly rivalry had existed between Fitzgerald and Dempster, and it had been Fitzgerald's pet ambition to, some day, beat the other's record. Popular and respected though he was, he still lacked one thing to attain the Northland's fullest acclaim, and that was to establish faster time than the trail-hardened Dempster on this annual patrol. Consequently, when he returned from a short leave Outside in the spring of 1910 with the rank of Inspector, giving him full control over the newly-created Mackenzie River sub-district, his thoughts turned immediately to his long-cherished dream. He would run the Dawson Patrol himself this coming winter—reversing it and setting out from Fort McPherson.

There was but one way in which he could hope to better Dempster's time, and that was to travel light, cutting equipment, food and dog-feed to the irreducible minimum. It meant challenging Fate itself, but that was an old trick in the North. Superbly confident of his ability to match his brain and brawn against the worst that Nature had to offer he made his plans accordingly.

In the cold grey dawn of December 21st John Firth, the factor, the Reverend Whittaker, and Constables Blake and Somers gathered outside the grey-mudded walls of the Hudson's Bay post at Fort McPherson to wish Fitzgerald "God-speed", the hoods of their caribou-skin ahtegis pulled about their heads to protect them from the searing blasts that roared down from the Pole.

The party was a small one, comprising Inspector Fitzgerald, Constables Kinney and Taylor, capable and experienced men, and ex-Constable Carter, who had recently taken his discharge and had been engaged to act as guide since, in 1907, he had made the trip with Forest, and was supposed to know the route. Esau, a Louchoux Indian, was to accompany them as far as Mountain Creek.

A cold, dead mist hung over the desolate Delta with its network of frozen channels and dense tangle of frost-rimed willows, obscuring the distant mountain ranges. The breath of the on-lookers crackled as it met the frosty atmosphere of sixty-two below. Worming his feet into the snowshoe lines Carter crunched with gathering speed along the crusted trail that dropped to the frozen surface of the Peel. Whips cracked. Bells jangled sonor-

ously. The dogs leapt into their collars. With a casual "See you in March!" Fitzgerald waved his mittened hand to Somers and the patrol was on its way.

January, 1911, one of the coldest months in the records of the Mounted Police, turned to an equally bitter February.¹ So bitterly cold was it that the forest animals kept to their holes, and the redmen to their lodge fires. Day after day the Dawson thermometer registered eighty, ninety and a hundred degrees of frost. Horses were confined to stables, dogs bled at the mouth, while the black breath of the Yukon River nipped the lungs of the men out on patrol.

With mounting anxiety Superintendent Snyder, Officer Commanding at Dawson, peered, day after day, through the grey mist that hung above the treacherous Yukon for a sight of the sinuous lines worming their way across the white surface that would betoken the approach of the patrol from McPherson—now long since overdue. But February moved towards its closing week without a sign of Fitzgerald and his party. A screaming blizzard had torn down the telegraph line to the southward and left the river ice piled high with mighty drifts. Then, on February 20th, Snyder's anxious vigil was rewarded. Creeping slowly across the grey-white wastes were a number of diminutive specks and a serpentine line of moving dog-teams. "Thank God!" he ejaculated, his lined face and tired eyes relaxing for the first time in many weeks.

But his relief was short-lived. As the moving figures took shape and form it became obvious, from the swing of their bodies, that they were not white men but Indians. With anxious eyes he watched them ploughing through the salty snow which rose in feathery clouds from beneath the webbed frames of their snowshoes. At last he clasped hands with the cowed and frost-scarred leader, Esau's cousin. A few curt questions elicited sinister news. Fitzgerald had sent Esau back from Mountain Creek on New Year's Day! Yet Mountain Creek was but twenty days travel from Dawson—and fifty-one days had now elapsed! Fear clutched at the Superintendent's heart.

Corporal Dempster was feeding his huskies when a speeding dog-team drew up before the barracks at Forty Mile and a fur-clad Constable with frost-rimed eyes handed him a letter. Realizing instinctively that something serious was afoot he scanned the missive anxiously. Fitzgerald and his party were lost. He was to leave for Dawson immediately to search for the missing men.

A man of smaller calibre might have experienced a feeling of momentary satisfaction at the realization that his rival's delay had left him supreme in his mastery of the North and his record unimpaired. But the tall, dark, thirty-four-year-old N.C.O. had but one thought in mind from the moment he read the Superintendent's hastily penned note. His friends and trail companions were in serious danger. Nothing must be left undone to effect their immediate rescue. For none knew better than Dempster how Death stalked those sombre passes in such bitter and unrelenting cold.

February 27th saw Dempster and Constable Fyfe swinging out from Dawson with their dog-teams towards the treeless divide that held the secret of the lost patrol. With tireless stride they forced their huskies hard on the tail of Charlie Stewart's hissing snowshoes. Led by their Scots-Louchoux guide they crunched through the stunted forests and followed the tortuous path of frozen streams as they led higher and higher towards the saw-toothed summits that tusked the coppery sky ahead.

Dipping now and then into purple-shadowed canyons; slogging up Moosehide Creek on creaking snowshoes, ever urging the dogs onward, they climbed the glaciated side of still another summit until, in all directions, there reared thousands of snow-capped peaks tinged with the smoky red radiance of the sun that still lurked most of the day below the horizon. Deep purple shadows, merging into blue and indigo, filled the deep ravines and valleys, throwing the mountain-tops into stark relief against the cold, coppery sky. Twelve days of arduous travel, made increasingly difficult by the constant overflow, brought them up Wolf Creek to the Little Wind. But still no sign of the patrol.

On the morning of March 12th Charlie Stewart's lynx-like eyes observed a faint impression in the snow which urged them onward with renewed vigour. But the tracks were obliterated by frozen overflow, and when they turned into the Big Wind River it was with the silent prayer that they were heading in the right direction.

As the sun dropped in a riot of scarlet, gilding the saw-toothed mountains behind them in a flood of golden glory, they made for a stand of spruce. Halting the dogs, Fyfe emitted an involuntary exclamation of surprise. Others had also camped there, for, scattered in the snow, were empty bully-beef cans; the kind issued to the Police for rations!

Next day they came upon more tracks which, for some in-

explicable reason, instead of cutting the loops at portages, followed the winding course of the frozen stream. Dempster's uneasiness deepened into grave concern when, in a single day's travel, they passed three night camps of the party they were trailing. The inference was obvious. "Looks like him heap hungry!" vouchsafed Charlie Stewart.

None doubted now that they were following Fitzgerald's disorganized retreat since the frozen snowshoe tracks led *downstream* towards Fort McPherson. At dusk next day they drew up before a dilapidated cabin. Entering, Fyfe struck a match and peered around. Against a wall was propped a shadowy toboggan, with six sets of harness depending from the head. On the floor lay the paws of a dog. Near by—still more significant sight—the rib-bones gnawed to a polish. "*Hell*," he cried, "they're eating dog!"

Silently, their faces grim with unspoken thoughts, they cooked and ate their supper.

At dawn they were on the trail again, slogging behind their dog-teams while the stars still glittered in the steely sky above, anxious not to lose a moment's time. The night camps of the retreating party were becoming pathetically closer to each other while, at each, were the ominous remains of sleigh dogs they had been forced to eat. Still, it seemed inconceivable that anything really serious could have happened to the redoubtable Fitzgerald.

Swiftly they left the long white miles behind them, the distance to Fort McPherson rapidly decreasing. Halting at Collin's fishing cabin, only fifty miles from the fort, they made another ominous discovery: a despatch bag bearing the letters "R.N.W. M.P." lashed to a smoke-blackened beam!

"Must have left it to lighten the load," suggested Fyfe in a tone that lacked conviction.

"But we're less than two days from McPherson," snorted Dempster impatiently.

The discovery acted like a cold douche to their hopes and a significant silence brooded over the huddle of white-faced men. For, had Fitzgerald reached the fort alive, he would have returned for that mail-bag long ago.

Crossing a snow-filled swamp next day there arose forlornly before them a tent, all twisted and awry. Fyfe pointed at the tin cups containing dregs of frozen tea. "Must have boiled the kettle and figured on a last push to reach the fort." Pursued by gloomy thoughts they crunched on across the dismal muskeg, the

sky above them as grey as their own spirits. Two miles farther on they came upon more indications of the rout: two sets of harness and a toboggan abandoned in the snow. A still discernible furrow of old snowshoe tracks led towards the bank while, a hundred yards away, a wind-torn piece of rag fluttered mournfully from a willow.

A dim trail through the souging pines brought them face to face with stark tragedy. Side by side lay the frozen bodies of Constables Kinney and Taylor, emaciated to the last degree, the former's feet swollen to twice their normal size. And, mute testimony to Fitzgerald's attempt to provide for them till he could summon aid was the kettle, half-filled with frozen strips of moose-hide, which lay beside the long-dead camp-fire.

From beneath the bodies Dempster removed a gunnysack containing some duffles, moccasins and Inspector Fitzgerald's diary. No doubt the men had lived for days, deceived a thousand times into thinking the noises of the woods were those of the rescue party that never came; hugging closer and closer within their rabbit robes as the icy fingers of Death crept closer and closer to their vitals. Kinney had died first, leaving his companion with naught but his bitter and despairing thoughts for company until the friendly rifle that lay across his legs released him from his purgatory.

With full hearts they covered the bodies with brush to keep off prowling animals and pressed on. Ten miles farther on they struck a faint trail leading towards a cutbank. Suddenly Fyfe kicked up a broken snowshoe. Near by, upon a pile of spruce boughs, they came upon the bodies of Carter and Fitzgerald. The broken snowshoe, the last of a series of disasters, had forced them to stop and build a fire that neither of them were destined to leave. Too weak to carry on any farther they had been forced by an overpowering Nature to give up at last the unequal fight within a scant twenty-six miles of succour. Beside those whispering pines they had spoken their last thoughts to each other, their sorties for wood becoming shorter and shorter and more burdensome until Death at last claimed Carter. Fitzgerald had covered his companion's face with a handkerchief, then, realizing his own hours were numbered, he had scrawled on a scrap of paper with a charred twig from the dying camp-fire, his last will and testament: "All money in despatch bag and bank, clothes, etc., I leave to my dearly beloved mother, Mrs. John Fitzgerald, Halifax. God bless all. F. J. Fitzgerald, R.N.W.M.P."

Fitzgerald had failed, but in his failure he had attained an everlasting glory in the courage, bravery and discipline with which he faced his destiny that far transcended any passing plaudits that might have been his for accomplishments on the trail. Straightforward and honest to the last, Fitzgerald admitted frankly in his curt but heroic diary that the selection of an incompetent guide was the principal cause of the disaster. "Carter is completely lost and does not know one river from another," he wrote on January 17th. "We have now only 10 pounds of flour and 8 pounds of bacon and some dried fish. My last hope is gone and the only thing I can do is to return and kill some of the dogs to feed others and ourselves. . . . We have now been a week looking for a river to take us over the divide, but there are dozens of rivers and I am at a loss. I should not have taken Carter's word that he knew the way from Little Wind River."

In that diary, guarded by Kinney and Taylor with their dead bodies, was told in short, concise words the story of that heroic and tragic fight with appalling hardships and of the disciplined retreat on a nauseating diet of dog-meat. Ere turning back they had travelled continuously for twenty-seven days on snowshoes through the bitterest weather known in half a century. And, from January 18th to February 5th, when the last entry appeared, they had tramped with torn and bleeding feet two hundred and thirty long miles of agony, battling bitter cold, freezing overflow and ever-deepening snow—two hundred on dog-meat and the rest on boiled leather and moosehide, their magnificent fortitude forcing their shrunken limbs and tortured feet to carry them almost within sight of safety.

The last act of this tragic drama was enacted in the little plot behind the small white-painted Anglican church at Fort McPherson. Not a dry eye was there in that drab, lonely polar outpost as the Reverend Whittaker intoned the burial service and the farewell salvos from the rifles of the scarlet-coated escort rolled across the lonely tundra—not even among the slant-eyed Louchoux who had gathered at the graveside with their squaws in a last gesture of respect to the white *Shimarganishuk* who had crossed the Great Divide.

NOTE: Mrs. John M. Fitzgerald, mother of Inspector Fitzgerald, died at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on February 13th, 1939.—P.H.G.

Twelve years after this tragic event I made a similar journey by dog-sled across the Arctic Rockies in the depth of winter from Aklavik to Fort Yukon, five hundred miles north of Dawson, and thence to Fairbanks, and can well understand how easy it would be to get lost in these moun-

tains, especially in the treeless region above timber-line. My guides were two Louchoux Indians, Lazarus Sitchinilli—who later took a prominent part in helping the Police to round up the Mad Trapper of the Rat River—and John Doe. It was a matter of continual wonder to me that these men were able to slog along on their snowshoes along one frozen creek bed after another, over snow-covered summit after summit, when there seemed nothing to distinguish one from another. Only occasionally were they at fault. Then they would climb the nearest elevation, survey the endless panorama of white-capped peaks and purple-shadowed valleys through the dim half-light and on they would go again without hesitation. With one's back trail obliterated by a blizzard it would be the easiest thing in the world to become completely lost in this endless upthrust of snow-clad peaks.—P.H.G.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ENIGMA OF THE POLAR SPACES

FROM the grim desolation of Fort McPherson the scene changes to the sunny and picturesque frontier settlement of Athabasca Landing, two thousand miles to the southward; the "jumping-off" place for the vast and still almost unexplored Mackenzie-Athabasca country, wherein skin-clad Crees, Chipewyans and Yellow Knives continued to hunt and trap and barter the spoils of the forests at the picketed fur forts as their forefathers had done for countless generations.

It was early in June, 1911, and the Landing was celebrating in traditional style the forthcoming departure of the Hudson's Bay scow brigade on its annual voyage into the Great Lone Land. Word that the weekly stage from Edmonton had topped the summit of the Tawatinaw Hills had brought a motley horde of coppery humanity spilling through the slatted doors of the rowdy Union Hotel to size up the passengers aboard. Their snaky locks bound in fluttering scarves of rainbow hue, the tawny sons of the Silent Places jostled and laughed and argued, filling the pine-scented air with a blasphemous medley of Cree and French and broken English.

Avoiding a creaking cavalcade of cayuse-drawn carts, old man Kennedy cursed the buckskin-clad drivers roundly, flourished his whip, swung his sweating blacks around and brought the stage to a clattering halt before the noisy horde of *voyageurs* whose alcohol-brightened eyes bespoke the festive spirit that was abroad. From the mud-encrusted vehicle tumbled Mounties, priests and traders, and two broad-shouldered men in their late twenties: Harry V. Radford and Tom G. Street, both attired in the cowboy Stetsons, khaki clothes and beaded moccasins of the frontier.

Thick-set and genial, Tom Street grinned as the swaying tide of humanity forced him through the swinging doors of the saloon. But Radford, with impatient gesture, shook off the friendly hands of unknown roisterers. Dumping their baggage behind the bar they shouldered through the milling throng, stepped outside and padded towards the red-roofed barracks where hard-boiled "Black Jack" MacDonnell reigned as watchdog for the North West Mounted.

Radford and his companion thrilled to the picturesque pageant the frontier settlement presented. For weeks long-limbed Crees and tawny Chipewyans had been paddling their frail birch-barks, laden with beaver, bear and silver fox skins, towards this metropolis of the Silent Places to barter them for flour, sowbelly, guns and ammunition.

Everywhere the two strangers heard the soft, sibilant Cree and the French *patois* of the forests. Scarlet-clad Mounties jostled gnarled rivermen whose ghost-like dogs slunk ever at their heels. Tartan-clad squaws pigeon-toed behind their tawny masters. Black-robed priests exchanged "*Bo'jours!*" with bearded trappers whose vigilant eyes never left their pelt-laden canoes lest marauding dogs should pounce upon the treasured cargoes and destroy them. From all along the river front arose the pungent odour of boiling pitch, the tattoo of caulking hammers and the soft purl of the Athabasca's waters.

"We're going north," Radford told the burly, black-moustached policeman, who invited them into his white-painted office and scrutinized them with piercing eyes. "We'll be leaving with the Athabasca scow brigade in the morning," he continued in quick, clipped tones with just a trace of arrogance. "The Smithsonian Institute in Washington has commissioned me to kill a wood buffalo in the Buffalo Preserve at Fort Smith and," he produced a note, "I have authority from Ottawa to do so."

As Black Jack puffed non-committally on his big briar Radford outlined the other objects of his visit.

"I believe," he said, "that Mr. Stefansson has discovered a race of 'Blonde' Eskimos near Bathurst Inlet that no white man has ever seen before. After getting our buffalo we intend to paddle on down to Fort Resolution and make the eight hundred mile traverse by canoe from Great Slave to Hudson Bay. From there we'll take dog-sleds and Eskimos and proceed north-west to Bathurst Inlet to study these people. By the summer of '13," Radford concluded in an off-hand manner, obviously intended to be impressive, "we expect to reach Fort McPherson and take the Hudson's Bay steamer south to civilization."

There was an assertive self-assurance about Radford that rubbed the hard-bitten Mountie the wrong way. Black Jack pulled at his moustache, surveyed the speaker critically and an amused flicker lighted his eyes.

"Well," his deep voice rumbled, "I don't wish you no tough luck, but . . . let me tell you, there's a whole lot of tough slog-

ging ahead of you, and not much *pâté de foie gras* or fancy eating either. You'll have to live right off the country, and eat your meat—when you get it—raw and frozen. And, if you don't mind me telling you, I think you're both plumb loco."

Everywhere yellow lights glowed from small-paned windows as the two young men left the barracks. Huge cooking fires converted the conical tepees of the Crees into flaming triangles of orange against the purple-shadowed pines. From the Union saloon, packed to its very walls with roistering rivermen and loud-mouthed trappers, rose songs, shouts and raucous bursts of ribald laughter. From shack and cabin came the lilting strains of the Red River Jig, the throb of tom-toms and the thump, thump of moccasined feet. Athabasca Landing had burst into a farewell orgy of celebration.

It was late the following day when the last piece of freight, and the last unconscious riverman, was dumped aboard the scows.

"*Pemiskark!*" roared old François, the guide.

The sonorous call rolled from one bronze throat to another. Brawny shoulders threw their weight behind long, pushing poles. Slowly, sluggishly, the *bateaux*, piled high with freight for the fur forts from Fort McMurray to the Arctic, slipped from the grip of the viscous mud to be caught in the Athabasca's current and whirled swiftly out in mid-stream. An interchange of ribald oaths and pungent pleasantries 'twixt boatmen and dusky friends and sweethearts ashore; a last staccato volley of musketry, and the thirty *bateaux* strung out in a long, wavering line to be swept, one by one, round the forested bend ahead.

Aboard the scows, passengers made nests for themselves amongst the cases, bales and kegs of gunpowder. There was Angus Brabant, eagle-eyed potentate of the Mackenzie; Indian Agent Conroy, northward bound to pay King George's treaty money to the tribesmen. There were priests and nuns and red-coated Mounties. And, in the flag scow, where Captain Haight, *Okemow* and "Admiral" of the fleet, maintained his prestige on the quarterdeck with gold lace and iron-bound chest, stood Radford and Street, their faces lighted with anticipatory smiles—northward bound at last to cut a niche for themselves in the Northland's hall of fame.

Three weeks later they emerged through a dismal delta choked with driftwood to see the grey horizon of lonely Great Slave Lake reaching out in magnificent isolation before them.

Ahead lay Fort Resolution, gateway to the land of the caribou and the musk-ox, surrounded by hundreds of squat, smoke-stained Yellow Knife and Dog-Rib teepees.

Clubbing a path through the horde of hungry curs that infested the smoky village they entered the fort, shook hands with Chris Harding, the factor, and asked for guides.

"Come right in," he invited. "Sure I'll get you a couple of guides. There's lots of Indians around right now."

Next day they transferred their outfit to two sleek grey-painted canoes. In the stern of each knelt a ragged Slavey, paddle in hand. "Watch yourselves," admonished Harding, shaking hands. "You've a damned tough trip ahead of you."

Surrounded by a thousand motley redskins he watched the young men depart. Soon the canoes were mere pin-points on the grey infinity of waters.

With thoughtful mien the factor retraced his steps towards the fort. Did these fellows realize the immensity of the task before them, he wondered. To the north and east rolled nearly a million square miles of unmapped, unexplored, and almost untrodden territory—an area almost a third the size of the United States—most of it devoid of trees for fuel and shelter; a land given over even by the Indians and the Eskimos to the migratory caribou, the ravening wolves, the polar bear and the prehistoric musk-oxen; a land wherein Arctic night and Polar blizzards reigned for six months in the year.

Commissioner Aylesworth Bowen Perry, the tall, dour ruler of the North West Mounted Police, gazed from the trail-stained letter to the snow-powdered roofs of Regina barracks outside the window. It was the wintry morning of November 10th, 1913. A red-coated Orderly opened the door, clicked his heels and saluted. "Inspector Beyts reporting, sir."

A tall, clear-eyed, muscular man, tanned by the Yukon's suns and blizzards, entered briskly and stood at attention.

"Mr. Beyts," remarked the Commissioner, "I'm getting anxious about these two fellows—Radford and Street. They left Resolution over two years ago; were due to meet the Hudson's Bay steamer at Fort McPherson last July, but haven't shown up. Here's a report from that detachment."

Beyts nodded.

"Six months after they left Fort Resolution," continued the Commissioner, "Corporal Walters reported running across their

Slavey guides in the Buffalo Preserve near Fort Smith. The Indians said they didn't like Radford. He drove them too hard—was too high-handed and overbearing. So, while Radford and Street slept, their guides left them on a portage somewhere in the heart of the Barren Lands."

"Deserted them?"

"Exactly! Superintendent Demers reports that Radford and Street reached Hudson Bay last summer and headed for Bathurst Inlet, looking," he laughed thinly, "for those 'Blonde' Eskimos of Stefansson's. From there they were to follow the Arctic coast west the remaining thousand miles with sledges to Fort McPherson."

"A hare-brained scheme," ejaculated Beyts.

"Granted. But don't forget, they *did* make that eight hundred mile trip across the Barrens from Fort Resolution to Hudson Bay—and without guides."

Beyts inclined his head.

"Somewhere in that two thousand mile stretch of Arctic coast and tundra, between Hudson Bay and the Mackenzie Delta, these men have disappeared. They may have got lost. They may be living with some unknown tribe of Eskimos. Anything may have happened to them. Mr. Beyts, you'll have to search for these two men. You'll sail on the *Village Belle* from Halifax in July, proceed north along the Labrador coast, through Hudson Straits and up Chesterfield Inlet to Baker Lake." He ran his finger over a map. "That'll take you a good two hundred miles into the Barrens. There you'll establish a base, hunt caribou inland, put up meat caches, then proceed overland with dog-sleds after freeze-up until you contact the Eskimo tribe believed to exist in the Bathurst Inlet region and ascertain the whereabouts of these men. I understand," he added grimly, "that travelling's particularly difficult in this Hudson Bay region, and that you'll also have to live largely off the country. I think that's everything."

Saluting, Beyts turned and made his way back to his office.

A capable and popular policeman, genial and good-natured, Beyts took things as they came. Yet no one knowing anything of that God-forsaken country west of Hudson Bay could relish such a commission. First, a three thousand five hundred mile voyage through ice-filled seas to the western shore of that great frozen bay. Then, a thousand mile sled journey in the bitter cold and depressing darkness of an Arctic winter through the most in-

hospitable, blizzard-lashed country in the world to search for two puny humans.

Only one man had ever made that journey, Samuel Hearne, the Hudson's Bay explorer. That was a century and a half before, and it had taken him three years of gruelling effort. Beyts shrugged his shoulders. It was all in the day's work. . . .

Ten months later Stanley Beyts, his body encased in a hooded fur ahtegi, stood at the rock-bound mouth of lonely Chesterfield Inlet gazing with mingled feelings at the *Village Belle* as she scurried away through a curtain of spinning flakes towards Port Nelson, five hundred miles to the southward.

The hoods of their fur ahtegis pulled about their heads to protect them from the biting blasts, Sergeant-Major Caulkin and Constables Paddy Conway and Pasley were piling up the snow-powdered baggage. . . Lithe, sinewy men, inured to hunger, hardship and privation, they murmured disgustedly at the tough luck that had left them marooned on this bleak spot two hundred miles from their destination so late that hunting caribou and putting up meat caches that year was already entirely out of the question.

From the outset, wind, weather and icebergs, even the very elements themselves, had conspired to make that voyage a living hell. Crushed in the ice, the *Village Belle* had nearly carried all to Davy Jones's locker. Driven by engine failure and contrary winds into heavy pack-ice she had escaped by a miracle, being cast ashore upon the glacial rocks of Greenland. A month later, she had limped with lacerated sails into the ice-filled mouth of unfriendly Chesterfield, dumped men and supplies unceremoniously ashore and beaten it south to find safe harbourage.

Lashed and buffeted by blizzards of inconceivable ferocity Inspector Beyts and his men managed, with numbed hands, to nail the wet and swollen lumber into the semblance of a building. As it dried, gaping holes and cracks admitted the frigid blasts from the Pole. They called the place the Ice House.

Faced with the utter impossibility of making the overland sledge journey across the frozen Barrens without meat caches, or supply depots along the lonely line of travel, Beyts called a council of war. There was but one thing left to do. To hitch up the dogs and make the long five hundred mile journey south to Port Nelson, where a rough frontier settlement had arisen in anticipation of the Hudson Bay railroad some day reaching that dreary and unattractive spot. From there word could be sent, advising the Com-

missioner of the enforced delay of the Barren Land Patrol till the following winter and asking that the *Village Belle* return with another year's supplies after break-up.

On the bitter grey dawn of January 2nd, 1915, Beyts, muffled in Eskimo clothing, snapped his six-fathom walrus-hide lash over the pointed ears of his sharp-nosed huskies. With affrighted howls they leapt into the breast-straps. The ice-shod komatik, loaded high with caribou and seal meat, crunched over the crusted drifts. Through the frosty air came muffled farewells, deadened by the awful cold. Then Constable Pasley and the Eskimo snowhouse builders, Sullivan and Bye-Bye, loped in the wake of the sled to be engulfed in the violet darkness.

The damp cold of Hudson Bay is more terrible than that of any part of the Arctic. Even at sixty-five below the frigid air is never still, and the paralysing dampness, penetrating the thickest furs, seems to freeze the very marrow in one's bones. Nowhere in that white, blizzard-swept void this side of Fort Churchill would there be a tree or stick of firewood with which to make a camp-fire.

Salty tides, rolling far inland, left jagged masses of sharp, up-ended ice piled one atop another over which they had to haul their heavy-laden komatiks with brute force. Dog-feed failed. Starvation at length stared Beyts and Pasley in the face. Nowhere was there a single sign of game. Dogs staggered groggily on. Some died. Some froze in the traces, only to be fed to their team-mates in order to keep up their strength. One famished dog went raving mad. The weakest ones were killed and fed to the others. In a second they were torn to shreds.

Light-headed, the men staggered through the awful cold, falling, rising, reeling on, waving their whips and cursing; raving at times in semi-delirium—groping in imagination through tropical forests towards lovely girls who held baskets of food temptingly beyond their reach. More dogs died and were devoured.

They reeled on through the night. Dogs, no—wolves! snarled ahead. Star-like twinkles broke the empurpled darkness where stars did not belong. Then spectral figures surged about them. Not a moment too soon they had staggered into Fort Churchill.

A diminutive Santa Claus in moleskin parki trimmed with frosted white fox came forward, his upraised lantern casting yellow streamers into the blue of the night. It was Ashton Alston, the factor.

"You fellows are sure all in," he exclaimed with alarm.

"Here, Oman—unhitch those dogs and take those two Huskies over to the Men's House."

Soon Beyts and Pasley were thawing frozen beards and icy bodies before the crackling Carron stove while, from the kitchen, came the delectable odour of simmering coffee and caribou steaks sizzling in the pan.

Gazing over the bleak white world next morning Beyts saw in the distance, dominating the treeless landscape, the frozen fortress of Fort Prince of Wales. Built by the Hudson's Bay Company over one hundred and fifty years before to protect this forgotten land from the intrusion of French freebooters—the second strongest fortification on the continent of North America—it had been battered to ruins by the cannon of LaPerouse's frigates and stood, a monument to a glory almost forgotten, its forty-two snow-covered cannon lying where they'd been thrown by French soldiers long since dead. Behind these forty-two foot thick ramparts of quarried rock had ruled the half-breed Governor, Moses Norton, his harem filled with the pick of the dusky beauties of the land. Unscrupulous and overbearing, affecting the airs and graces of a European prince in a semi-military uniform of beaded buckskin, gold braid and velvet, this wilderness despot had poisoned without compunction those who refused him wives or daughters. And from the massive stone portals of this ancient stronghold had sallied Samuel Hearne on November 6th, 1769, to search for the Far-Off-Metal-River—the Coppermine of to-day—the only white man so far to traverse these awesome Barrens to the Arctic coast in the dead of winter.

Luxuriating in the pleasant warmth of factor Alston's comfortable quarters Beyts wondered just how long it was going to take him to make that self-same journey.

CHAPTER XIV
THE TERRORS OF THE TUNDRA

SUMMER brought hordes of shaggy Iglulik Eskimos to Chesterfield Inlet in their skin oomiaks and needle-shaped kyaks. Around the Police post arose tent-shaped tupeks of sealskin, the porches lined with eider ducks, seal carcasses, polar bear meat and venison in progressive stages of decay, rendering passage through the encampment an ordeal to Beyts' stomach as he sought information concerning the missing white men.

Scraps and tag-ends of native gossip led him to the evil-smelling tupek of Itowaluk, a squat, flat-faced, grinning Eskimo in shaggy polar bearskin clothes. Squatted upon the partly frozen carcass of a deer that smelled to high heaven, he unearthed at last a clue of vital interest.

"Him say," interpreted Bye-Bye, "two summers ago strange Huskie named Akualack, him come from de Land of Ghosts wid shingabee and harpoons on him back. Him trabble many moons for hunt'um musk-ox and lib wid dem wild mans, de Killinimuits. Him tell Itowaluk two white mans dey come dere one day and de Killinimuits dey plenty scare. First time dey see'um *Kablunats*—white man. De white mans gib'um fish-hooks, knives and t'ings. De tall man dey call Ishumatik, dat means de man what does de t'inking—de boss. De odder dey call Kiuk—wood—because him plenty strong. Dese white mans dey hire'um two Huskies, Harla and Kancak, to take dem long 'way to de land ob de Nunatagmuits for catch'um Company oomiak. Dat all he know."

There seemed little doubt that the Ishumatik referred to was Radford and that Kiuk was Tom Street.

Repeated questioning failed to add further information save that the strange Eskimo, after remaining a few days hunting walrus, had disappeared over the sandy eskars, trudging towards the land of the setting sun. From Herbert Hall, giant factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Chesterfield, Beyts confirmed Akualack's visit and placed the date at June 11th, 1913; two years before. Other Eskimos told of coming across a squared post on

a lake far inland with "white man markings" on it which Hall stated would be Hanbury Lake.

Meanwhile Caulkin and Pasley, with a crew of greasy Igluliks, were searching the ice-floes for tusked walrus. One after another these yellow-fanged elephantine creatures fell, snorting anger and defiance from blood-frothed mouths as stinging bullets tore through hide and flesh. The boat returned laden down with walrus meat for dog-feed and immense tusked heads for trophies.

A stormy July slipped into a still stormier August. Impatiently Beyts awaited the return of the *Village Belle* to move dog-feed, buildings and equipment two hundred miles inland to Baker Lake at the head of the inlet. Not only would this shorten the patrol, but it would provide a base well into the Barrens. As time wore on his anxiety increased. Again the mighty caribou migration was in progress. For days and weeks they would roll southward across the barren tundra—a palpitating, seething ocean of animated flesh and fur, a forest of heaving, tossing antlers, the castanet-like clicking of thousands of heart-shaped hoofs shattering the awesome silence. But once winter blizzards commenced to sweep those treeless Barrens they would make for the protection of the timber far to the south and the frozen tundra would be devoid of life save for ravening wolves and Arctic foxes. Only by catching this autumn migration would it be possible to establish the meat caches necessary to ensure the success of the overland patrol in its search for Radford and Street.

Again Nature bared her fangs. Not till August 19th did the vessel nose her way through the ice-floes into Chesterfield. It was September 9th before Police and cargo were flung ashore at the head of the inlet and the *Village Belle* scuttled south again to safety.

Hardly had the throb of the ship's engines ceased to pulsate across the snow-swept rocks than out of the north-east screamed another merciless blizzard. To the whistling whine of a hundred mile an hour gale that tore down everything that impeded its impetuous path Beyts and his men lay huddled for days in a fireless dug-out of icy trunks and barrels and hard-frozen tarpaulins.

Again dark days settled heavily upon the lonely land. Biting blizzards moaned ceaselessly across the treeless tundra. All life, save for a few scattered caribou and trailing wolves, had deserted that endless field of empurpled snows—the Barrens.

On the chill morning of December 3rd, 1915, Beyts prepared

for that Arctic horror—a mid-winter patrol into the Barrens—to establish meat caches for a spring dash to Bathurst Inlet. Before the puny barracks were gathered the fur-clad forms of Paddy Conway and three Eskimo guides, their ice-shod komatiks, piled high with frozen meat and rations, hitched to twenty-four sharp-eared sleigh dogs. Conway turned to Caulkin and Pasley. “Well . . . so-long, boys.”

His whip cracked, the huskies spread out fan-wise, the sleds slewed and gathered impetus, and soon the patrol was swallowed up in the flickering green flames of the Aurora.

Menaced by hordes of ravening wolves, snaring snowy Arctic hares, or ptarmigan, to eke out diminishing rations; camping at sixty below in frozen drifts or in an icy snowhouse, lacking always the friendly comfort of a camp-fire, Inspector Beyts and his men continued their gruelling task of setting up meat caches until they reached the distant Thelon, half-way point to where Akualack had reported seeing the white *Kab-lunats*.

The cold was pitiless, cruel and unrelenting. Day after day the silent struggle with an aroused Nature continued. Food ran short. Again dogs died from starvation or froze in the traces. The cold, damp mists that rolled inland from the sea stole into tent or igloo with such paralysing effect that the men shrank within themselves in their fur sleeping-bags in a vain effort to evade the clutch of its icy fingers. Day after day the knife-edged wind roared its age-old challenge. Ever onward through this titanic battle of Nature's forces to trail two missing men crept these puny humans who dared to defy the infinite might of the Arctic gods.

Famished dogs tore and devoured their harness and, escaping the vigilance of their masters, turned cannibal and rent each other apart. Thermos bottles, in which alone could be carried unfrozen liquid to quench the thirst, exploded with the intense cold. The tent caught fire. Then, disaster of disasters, the patrol was split and separated in a blinding storm, each carrying some of life's imperative necessities. For two sleepless nights, without food or bedding, Beyts combed the seething tundra. But Providence was kind. The parties came together and continued to struggle on.

Like frost-scarred scarecrows they staggered back to their base at Chesterfield on January 28th. Seven caribou had been killed and planted beneath the rocks on the distant Thelon for

use in the forthcoming spring dash across the Barrens—a goal which had taken five hundred and eighty-five tortured, aching miles to attain; fifty-two days of icy hell!

But the spring dash was not destined to materialize. Frightened by the terrors of the trail ahead the Eskimos flatly refused to act as guides. Again Beyts found himself thwarted. His tortured mind turned to ink and paper. To Commissioner Perry he wrote suggesting that the next attempt be made from the Mackenzie River side where dog-feed was easily obtainable and travel infinitely less exacting.

Determined still to reach the Killinimuit villages, Beyts prepared for still another contest with the Barrens. August slipped by without a sign of the *Village Belle*. Then, on September 9th, came the most bitter blow of all. Cleaving the ice-filled waters with her steel prow the *Nascopie*, the Hudson's Bay Company's supply ship, disgorged Sergeant Douglas, Constables Crombie and Chinn, and a tall, distinguished officer, Inspector F. H. French, who was to take over the command and press the search for the missing scientists.

With that indomitable persistence that had been so largely responsible for the Force's success, the rebuffs and difficulties had only strengthened the Commissioner's determination to see this thing through to the bitter end. Regardless of time, cost and human suffering, this search, once started, must be driven to a successful conclusion. Only then would the case be marked officially "closed".

His health undermined by an overwhelming succession of crushing blows and hardships, Beyts sailed south to assume command of Port Nelson sub-district, assured by the sympathetic French that the trail already broken would ensure the Force's ultimate success.

Again on March 21st, 1917, men, dogs, and komatiks laden with rations, walrus meat, rifles, ammunition and two canoes were drawn up before the puny barracks on lonely Chesterfield. Led by Inspector French and Sergeant-Major Caulkin, and accompanied by three Eskimos, Bye-Bye, Joe and Squashas, and two Eskimo women, still another assault was to be made upon the invincible Barrens that, since the dawn of Time, had resisted all man's efforts to conquer them.

Inland lay a number of meat caches covered with rocks to protect them from predatory wolves. For this time Providence had smiled. Autumn weather had been good, caribou thick as

flies, and the hunt had been successful.

The long spring days, the milder weather, and the iron crust formed upon the snow by alternate thawing and freezing, made travel infinitely easier. But again disaster struck. The intense hot, ultra-violet rays reflected from the dazzling surface of the burnished snow caused eyes to burn and smart until all seemed to be actually walking through a world of molten metal. Snow-blindness followed. With throbbing heads, their eyes bandaged with boracic lotion carried in small bottles suspended around their necks, they grasped the sled lashing, staggering and stumbling on, cursing this unyielding Land of Cain.

Blinding blizzards were followed by a thaw that turned the snow to icy slush through which they waded knee-deep from dawn to dusk, wrestling with heavy sledges that refused to budge despite the frantic struggles of the dogs. Panic-stricken at the thought of being left, marooned and helpless, in the heart of the unmapped Barrens by the break-up they struggled desperately towards the rugged coastline, still littered with the decaying whaleboats and wolf-gnawed skeletons of the hundred and forty men of the ill-fated Franklin Expedition who had sacrificed their lives there in their abortive search for the North-West Passage.

Exhausted by a day of tugging heavy sleds through icy slush and freezing water, French and Caulkin were aroused from a deep sleep by a howling pandemonium and the terrorized cries of frightened Eskimos. Huge furred bodies overwhelmed them, writhing, snarling. Hot fetid breath fanned their faces as bared fangs sought their throats. The clamour was indescribable.

"Wolves!" French shouted hoarsely, leaping for his rifle. "They've raided the camp. They're murdering the sleigh dogs."

Orange spears of flame stabbed the darkness. Gaunt wolves raised their blood-curdling battle-cry. Dogs screamed in an abandonment of fear and fury. Pin-points of flaming light gleamed through the empurpled darkness as lean, gaunt creatures launched themselves upon the camp, slashing about with ivory fangs. For an hour men and dogs fought the attacking grey squadrons until the beasts withdrew in sullen fury to devour their dead and lick their wounds.

Climbing a pressure-ridge of up-ended ice on May 7th, Inspector French saw stretched out before him a vast infinity of whiteness. He had reached the Polar Sea at last! A grim smile flickered across his lean, pinched, weather-beaten face that night

as he made entry in his Journal: "Reached Arctic coast east of Kent Peninsula. All oil, fuel and civilized grub gone." The backbone of the journey was broken, but there still remained the search for the missing men, and the return trek across the awesome tundra to distant Chesterfield.

Any day now might bring them suddenly face to face with Stone Age savages. Would they prove friendly or hostile? These Eskimos, French knew, had little cause to love the white man, for, when Samuel Hearne, the first and only white man to invade their icy domain prior to Radford and Street, had stumbled on an Eskimo camp at nearby Bloody Falls his two hundred Chipewyan Indians had butchered them remorselessly, sparing neither men, women nor children.

Already reports had reached the Police of the blood-thirsty character of the Stone Age tribes that roamed the sealing grounds ahead. So little regard had they for human life that often they ruthlessly slew their female children at birth. Blood feuds were frequent and, instead of burying their dead, they frequently abandoned them upon the ice for the wolves and foxes to devour. It was quite within the bounds of reason that these natives might prove hostile.

Again storms kept the patrol in camp. With clearing weather they hit the trail. Climbing a pressure-ridge towards noon Bye-Bye suddenly commenced to act like one possessed. Gesticulating and shouting he pointed to the double tracks of ivory-shod komatiks and the prints of many mukluk-shod feet upon the fresh snow. Eskimos—and not far off! Mounting another icy barrier their guides showed signs of fright, for across the frozen bay arose at last the dome-shaped igloos of a Killinimuit village.

With frightened cries fur-clad women fled from their fishing holes to the protection of the snowhouses. Dogs snarled vociferous protests. Over the sea-ice small cowed figures in long-tailed ahtegis of caribou-skin surged forward with inarticulate cries, the sun gleaming on the copper-points of upraised spears and murderous snow-knives.

"*Chimo! Chimo!*" cried French's frightened Eskimos, holding aloft their snow-knives in the peace sign.

"*Chimo! Chimo! Cudloona uvagut peeawunga tako Inninuit!*" cried French, stepping forward with outstretched hand.

"*Ah-kan-ah! Ah-kan-ah!*" came the guttural response.

Weapons dropped. Arms shot upward, returning the peace

sign. Slowly, suspiciously, the Killinimuits edged across the ice. Gathering courage a Tartar-faced savage with black moustache and small goatee moved out from the horde of strange, fur-clad, Mongol-like creatures.

"*Ah-kan-ah!*" he repeated, and launched into a babble of clicking gutturals.

"Mongaluktuk says for come to igloo," interpreted Joe, his black eyes flashing. "Plenty *took-too*; plenty *natchak*. He says for all come eat."

Relieved, but not disarmed, by the apparent friendliness of the savages French leapt upon the careening sledge as the yelping dogs swept swiftly forward. In a tumultuous riot of snarling canines, shouting men and flailing whips the teams surged into the village.

Sinewy hands unhitched the dogs and carried fur shingabees and baggage into a dome-shaped igloo. From all quarters came fur-clad figures, piling in until the place was crammed with odorous and curious-eyed humanity. With all about them laughing, jabbering and talking, Mongaluktuk squatted upon the fur-covered snow-bench and proceeded to do the honours. From a stone pot bubbling over a flickering blubber-lamp of stone his oily-faced wife ladled steaming blood-soup with a hollowed musk-ox horn dipper into horn cups and handed it around. To the hungry men it tasted good. It was followed by frozen *quok*, strips of *mukduk* from the bearded seal, and fatty chunks of seal meat from which the lady accommodately licked the grease ere passing it around—a mark of primitive politeness.

In that soot-blackened snowhouse, surrounded by the very Stone Age itself, French opened his inquiries, keeping his eyes alert for any signs of treachery.

"We have come far from the *kabloonan noona*—the white man's land—to find out what happened to our two brothers, missing these many years, who came this way." Bye-Bye interpreted.

Mongaluktuk sank his teeth into a fat piece of seal meat and squinted over the top.

"Ah-ha-ha!" he breathed, his mouth full. "Five winters ago two *Kablunats* came from the south. With them were three Eskimos. They came to an island on the Salt Sea called Kwogjuk. The tall one was named Ishumatik, and the other one Kiuk. Ishumatik was bad—not like his friend, whom we liked. The Eskimos they brought with them returned to the south and the *Kablunats* stayed with us. We didn't understand each other so

we talked with signs. They wanted two men to go with them west to the land of the Nunatagmuits."

The Eskimo paused, grinned and casually bit off another piece of blubbery meat. The igloo seemed suddenly to have become charged with electrical suspense. French's heart throbbed with anticipation. Would the next few words tear the veil from the mystery he had come so far to unravel, or would they dash his hopes to the ground?

In simple words the Eskimo resumed his story. "Two Eskimos," he said, "Harla and Kaneak, were going with the white man. He paid them with knives and fish-hooks and other things. But Kaneak's wife became sick. She fell on the ice and hurt herself, and he didn't want to leave her. The white man called Ishumatik got very mad and ran at Kaneak and hit him with a dog-whip. The other white man, Kiuk, tried to stop Ishumatik. The white man was shouting all the time. He dragged Kaneak to the water's edge. The other white man went with him, they were going to throw Kaneak into the sea. Everybody was frightened that the two white men were going to kill Kaneak."

He paused with dramatic effect, helped himself casually to another chunk of seal meat from the pot above the flickering *kudlik*, grinned amiably and continued.

"Hearing the noise, three men, Otikok, Hularark and Ameriangnak, ran out of the igloos, picked up their harpoons and sent them singing through the air. Impaled, Ishumatik fell, squirming like a stuck seal, his blood reddening the snow. Kiuk ran off, shouting, towards the sled and tried to grab his rifle. Otikok ran after him, grabbed him and held him in his arms while Ameriangnak ran his big snow-knife across his throat. Then we left the bodies on the ice and drove away. I don't know what happened to their things. The Eskimos took some, and some we left on the island. Their rifles we broke up and beat into tools after the cartridges were all used up."

Mongaluktuk sliced a piece of meat, his immense knife of native copper passing within a hair's-breadth of his nose. "I don't think this would have happened," he concluded with an expansive grin, "if the white man hadn't beaten Kaneak with a dog-whip, or if we'd understood their talk."

Here was the explanation of the scientists' disappearance. A simple story of a double slaying told by an eyewitness. But it left French in a quandary. This was the first Eskimo murder to mar the relations 'twixt Mounted Police and Eskimos. It was

evident, too, that the Eskimos felt they had done exactly the right thing. That the provocation had been deep there seemed not the slightest doubt. Should he arrest the killers, carry them thousands of miles south to be tried by a white man's jury who couldn't possibly understand the circumstances but would be guided by the Mosaic law of a life for a life? If he followed this course it would leave the Eskimo tribes with a sense of deep injustice, and create against the Force the bitterest hostility when the friendly co-operation of the two races was essential to the opening up of the Arctic.

Word had long since leaked through to Headquarters that Radford hadn't gotten along with the natives. Due to his arbitrary and overbearing character his trip north from Athabasca Landing had been beset with constant quarrels and misunderstandings with half-breeds and Indians alike. Obviously he had failed to see beneath the surface of Eskimo character, mistaking good-natured smiles for aboriginal stupidity. On the other hand, the Eskimos had made allowances for his ill-temper on the assumption that, being a white man, he could not, of course, be expected to know any better.

Instead of following the methods of Mounted Police fiction and "getting his man", Inspector French decided that there was no premeditated intention of committing murder and that the natives had simply, in their own minds, been observing the ancient and unwritten law of self-preservation. There was only one course left to follow. To tour the rugged coast of Bathurst Inlet and at each Stone Age encampment lay down the white man's law and warn these primitive savages of the dire consequences that would follow any more killings, regardless of the circumstances.

Driving over the sea-ice from one squalid village of sealskin tupeks to another French mapped the shoreline as he went, harangued the skin-clad natives, gathered flora and fauna, and took notes on the topography of the country. Hearing of a schooner locked in the sea-ice he made his way in that direction, boarded the *Teddy Bear*, shook hands with the veteran whaler, Captain Bernard, and secured from him some flour and tea and bacon—a pleasant change from the nauseating diet of seal meat and tom-cod.

Learning that Billy Phillips had established a post for the Hudson's Bay Company at Bernard Harbour near the entrance to Coronation Gulf to open up trade with Klengenberg's old

friends, the Cogmollocks, French kept his face to the north-west and came at length to a couple of unpretentious shacks bearing the high-sounding title of Fort Bacon. Here he secured more provisions and received word of another Mounted Police patrol under Denny LaNauze which was operating from the Mackenzie side in search of two more missing men—this time a couple of Roman Catholic priests.

Returning by slow marches to the rock-walled mouth of the Coppermine French established a permanent camp, put up fish for dog-feed, dried them on stages beneath the warming rays of the midnight sun; bartered sleds and sleigh dogs from curious Cogmollocks, and awaited the approach of winter to start on that long, soul-trying trek back to the head of Chesterfield Inlet.

On October 16th the declining sun dropped to its long winter sleep and Arctic twilight stole once more upon the land. Next day the patrol commenced its homeward march.

That mid-winter journey across the bleak, dark Barrens, through a world of purple-shadowed snowdrifts lighted only by the twinkling stars and the ghostly flames of the Aurora, transcended anything so far experienced in suffering. Their sole companions were the Barren Land wolves, sinister shapes that skirmished ever on the flanks of the party and at times even raided their camps and stole their sleigh dogs, and the fluffy Arctic foxes that barked fearlessly at them from atop the drifts.

By December 22nd their plight was desperate. Sleds and baggage had been abandoned as dogs died from exhaustion. Gaunt scarecrows, they urged the famished huskies onward, raving and cursing wildly in the semi-delirium of starvation. Four hundred long, white, awful miles to go—the indescribable cold paralysing their under-nourished and tired bodies. The last of the food exhausted, and half of the dogs—the legs of the expedition—gone!

Inspector French saw the ugly hand of Death stretching grisly fingers ever nearer. Involuntarily his thoughts turned to the Fitzgerald Patrol that had perished on the Dawson trail. Then his drooping eyes caught a glimpse of curved imprints in the blue drifts at his feet—the tracks of musk-oxen!

Their hollowed eyes burning from blackened, frost-scarred faces pinched with hunger and privation, they threw up a snow-house and huddled within as the Eskimos departed, rifle in hand, in the almost forlorn hope of remedying their desperate situation

by killing one or more of these prehistoric creatures.

The long, cold hours dragged by on leaden wings. Little was said, each man being too much absorbed with his own thoughts to engage in anything but desultory conversation. A day passed. Another dawn. A slight smoky redness tinged the western sky and died away. And still no sign of the hunters.

With a painful effort Caulkin crawled from the igloo and lurched weakly in their drifted tracks. The silence could almost be felt. Suddenly a slight sound smote his ears. The muffled crunch of snowshoes came dimly across the snow-fields. Then, with bowed heads, as though in deep dejection, two shadowy figures loomed through the half-light. A croaking cry broke the eerie stillness. "All right, boss." It was Bye-Bye's voice. "Kill'um plenty musk-ox. Plenty eat." They were bending beneath great loads of meat!

Christmas Day out there in the frozen Barrens was a day of rejoicing, of feasting, of cracking open marrow-bones, of eating to repletion delicious red, strength-giving meat. Who cared though blizzards howled around and clutched at their puny domicile of snow with icy fingers? No longer did fear tug at their heart-strings. Twenty magnificent musk-oxen had fallen before the bullets of the two Eskimos, sufficient to build up the strength of men and dogs and carry them a long way on their journey. A week was spent in regaining their strength, repairing torn clothes, and foraging for scrub willows for firewood. As much meat as could be hauled by the attenuated string of dogs was loaded on the sleds . . . and on again. The Thelon, said Joe, was not far off. Never had things looked brighter.

Yet, on January 11th, they were wrestling again with that bugbear of the Barrens—starvation. "Bitch Ticktack had seven pups," French wrote in his Journal, adding significantly, "Killed same and fed to dogs. . . ."

Two and a half months later, nearly five years after the search began, Commissioner Perry at Regina received word of the successful outcome of the longest and most difficult patrol in the history of the North West Mounted Police. A patrol that had carried Inspector French and his men five thousand one hundred and fifty-three miles afoot through unknown and unexplored territory on the very roof of the world and brought under the domination of the Force the last Stone Age people on the continent:

And, by an ironical twist of Fate, it had been left to Beyts

to wire the success of his colleague. The historic despatch was short and terse:

“Port Nelson, March 20th, 1918.

“Hudson's Bay packet ex-Chesterfield arrived last evening. Inspector French and party returned Baker Lake January 29th. All well.”

CHAPTER XV
LAND OF MISSING MEN

WHILE Inspector Beyts and Colonel French were tracking down the Eskimo murderers of Radford and Street, Mounted Police to the westward were engaged in solving still another enigma of this mysterious land of missing men.

At the very moment that Radford and Street were still thought to be toiling along the Arctic coast three men were seated round a huge box-stove in the little log Mission at Fort Norman high up on the banks of the frozen Mackenzie, absorbing the welcome heat thrown out by the crackling faggots, while the driving snow beat a rhythmic tattoo against the diminutive window-panes.

Fathers Rouvier and LeRoux, attired in the black soutanes, and wearing the glittering crucifix of the Oblate Fathers, were listening intently as D'Arcy Arden, clad in wolverine-trimmed ahtegi and Eskimo mukluks, told of the primitive Cogmollock Eskimos with whom he traded at his lonely post at Dease Bay on the rocky shores of Great Bear Lake.

"These Eskimos"—Father Rouvier hunched his sturdy form forward in his babiche-netted chair—"they are very primitive, are they not, monsieur?"

"They're primitive all right," agreed Arden. "Everything about em's primitive. Why, till Charlie Klengenberg wintered with 'em back in 1905 only one or two of the very old Cogmollocks had ever seen a white man. And these, I guess, just had a dim memory of the half-frozen, starving sailors belonging to that unfortunate Franklin Expedition hauling along their heavy whaleboats and dying in their tracks."

"And how do these *sauvages* live?" interjected LeRoux, his lean bearded face alight with interest.

"Well—in the summer they hunt the caribou herds over on the mainland and gather the skins for winter clothing. Then, when the sea freezes over, and there's enough snow to build igloos, they move out on to the ice and hunt the seal and polar bear with their copper-pointed spears and bows and arrows." He tapped the heel of his pipe into the stove.

Rouvier stroked his close-trimmed beard thoughtfully. "But these Cogmollocks—are they not ferocious?"

"Not so bad if you understand them," smiled Arden. "But, of course, they're damned quick-tempered, and never, if they can help it, will they ever fight face to face. If a Cogmollock gets a grudge against another he'll watch his chance till he can get his enemy off guard, then knife him, or shoot him, in the back."

"And they tell me," broke in LeRoux, "that these Cogmollocks, they kill their female children. They cannot be human to do such things!"

"Well," admitted Arden, "they *do* bump off their girl children now and then, but don't forget, Father, it's a pretty tough life, and the women depend entirely on the hunting ability of the men. It's just their way of preventing the women from outnumbering the men and becoming a burden on the others. Just another evidence of the stern law of Nature."

For a long time a deep silence ensued, broken only by the crackling of the fire and the buffeting of the snow against the darkened window-panes. Finally Father LeRoux arose to replenish the fire.

Rouvier heaved a deep sigh. "It's too bad," he remarked with a frown, "that the guidance of the Christian religion cannot be carried to these people to rescue them from their murderous and pagan ways and bring them the light of understanding."

D'Arcy Arden arose, dug his hands into his polar bear-skin mittens and with a final "*Bo'jour!*" departed to feed his huskies. For a long time the two priests talked together.

When, a few weeks later, the dog-team carrying the south-bound mail passed Fort Norman on its two thousand mile trek to Athabasca Landing, it carried to Bishop Breynat at Fort Resolution an earnest plea from the two Fathers that they be permitted to visit the heathen Cogmollocks and establish a Mission amongst them.

As patiently as they could the priests awaited a reply to their letter, knowing that the ice would prevent the steamer crossing Great Slave Lake until early in July. Meanwhile they discussed plans for the conversion of the Cogmollocks, and hoped against hope that the answer would prove favourable.

With July came perpetual daylight and the torrid heat of the short Arctic summer. A score of times each day they would scan the upper reaches of the river. At last their patience was rewarded. Gleaming whitely in the sunlight the stern-wheeled

Mackenzie River rounded a bend up-stream, her red paddles beating the water into froth, her sharp prow cleaving the chocolate flood of the mile-wide river. Plainly there pulsed on the still air the throbbing of the engines as she forged along in stately majesty as though conscious that she was the sole link 'twixt these lonely exiles and the distant world Outside. From her black funnel shot a white spiral of steam, and the hoarse wail of the siren echoed back from the rugged escarpment of Bear Rock. The red and white pennants unfurled on the morning breeze, and to the clanging of signal bells and the raucous orders of Captain Mills upon the bridge she eased in to the bank.

Hardly had the gang-plank been trundled ashore by a couple of swarthy deck-hands than the ship was overrun by a horde of Slavey and Mountain Indians, preceded by Fathers Rouvier and LeRoux, Tim Gaudet and D'Arcy Arden. While squaws and Indians poked about, gossiped with the half-breed crew and gazed wonderingly upon the engines, the whites climbed to the Texas deck to share the Captain's hospitality and hear the latest news of the Outside world.

From the Purser Tim Gaudet obtained the mail sack, and with the two priests at his heels climbed the steep bank to the picketed fort above. Within the log Indian Hall, wherein the factor was wont to hold council with his dusky tribesmen, he dumped the mail upon the floor, and trappers, traders and priests all helped to sort it out. At length Father Rouvier straightened up, brushed the dust from his soutane and, with a bundle of letters beneath his arm, made his way over to the Mission.

Within an hour the priests were back aboard, discussing with beaming faces their plans to leave forthwith for the land of the Cogmollocks. For the long-awaited letter had arrived, and with it the Bishop's blessing on the enterprise.

A few weeks later Father Rouvier and LeRoux knelt before the little altar in the log church at Fort Norman, receiving from the hands of Father Douchet the sacrament and benediction. In many ways it recalled similar scenes in the French-Canada of three centuries ago when, with the same simple rites, other black-gowned heroes had gone forth to the fiery stake and martyrdom at the hands of painted and bedizened Iroquois.

Already their three-ton York boat had been loaded with oak toboggans, sleigh dogs, axes, saws, harness, bales of dried fish for dog-feed and bundles of leathery and unappetizing-looking dried meat for rations, and the Indian crew squatted stolidly along the

shore bidding a last farewell to their squaws and children. A guttural shout greeted the priests as they slipped and slid down the steep trail leading to the waterfront.

"*Bo'jour!* And may *le bon Dieu* be with you." Father Douchet wrung their hands. Slaveys and Mountain Indians crowded around the two men, dimly realizing that they were departing on a journey fraught with imminent peril—a journey that led to the heart of the hunting grounds of their ancestral enemies, those Eaters of Raw Flesh. A last round of handclaps and "*Bo'jour's!*" and the Fathers clambered aboard. Moise, the guide, trundled out the stern-sweep, the red-skinned middlemen slipped their eighteen foot oars through the thole pins, the fathers waved their hands in a last farewell and, to the spluttering salute of Indian muzzle loaders, the boat swung out into the dun-coloured waters of the Mackenzie and swept with gathering speed towards the in-flowing waters of the Bear. Soon the spruce-fringed cutbank hid the party from sight.

With guttural grunts the Indians commenced to pad softly away. Rags Wilson turned his footsteps towards the picketed post of the Northern Trading Company. Tim Gaudet shook his head as he turned to the "free trader". "Ah! but those Fathers—they are brave men," he remarked in his peculiar French accent. "But . . . I do not know. Those Cogmollocks, they are queer people. Ah well!" he sighed, "maybe *le bon Dieu*, He will look after them. But me—I am afraid for them."

But Wilson only laughed and shrugged his shoulders. For Tim Gaudet, giant factor of the "Gentleman Adventurers", was like that.

Three weeks later a storm-battered York boat rode the crashing rollers through a swirling curtain of driving snow into the safe harbourage of Dease Bay at the north-east end of Great Bear Lake and ran its bow up on the flat rocks before the dilapidated log cabins that constituted D'Arcy Arden's trading post. It had been a soul-searing experience bucking the swift rapids of the turbulent and frigid Bear and contending with the angry moods of Great Bear Lake.

The unloading finished, they sank with tired sighs into the capacious babiche-netted chairs before the mud fireplace in D'Arcy's cabin and revelled in the welcome heat. Soon all gathered round the rough spruce table, doing full justice to a steaming hot meal of whitefish broiled on the coals, ponasked caribou ribs, marrow-bones, crisp brown bannock and mugs of

steaming tea. Supper over, they spread their rabbit-skin robes on the mud floor and slept the sleep of exhaustion.

Next morning they gave their tawny boatmen their rations and saw them depart with rapidly-swinging oars for Fort Norman. Then, as grey snow-clouds filled the autumn sky and great flocks of wild geese honked their way southward in V-shaped battalions, they netted fish for dog-feed and hung them on stages while they awaited the freeze-up and sufficient snow to enable them to start their gruelling sledge journey across the divide to the haunts of the Cogmollocks.

Ere long winter came roaring out of the North. The lakes and bays were sealed with ice and the rugged rocks buried deep beneath the sparkling drifts. The sun dropped lower and lower until it seemed to lack the energy to thrust its enormous scarlet rim above the white horizon. The time for departure had arrived.

Before them lay the most difficult and exacting part of their journey. There would be neither spruce brush for their night camp nor wood with which to build a camp-fire to thaw their frozen bodies. For two hundred miles and more the unblazed trail ahead led across blizzard-swept and treeless tundra, through snow-filled canyons and chasms, and over rock-ribbed divides to Bloody Falls where Samuel Hearne's Chipewyans had exterminated an entire camp of Eskimos in years gone by.

A smoky twilight bathed the snow-covered world a blood-red hue as the priests hitched up their dogs, and, with their wolverine-trimmed hoods white with frost, turned to Arden to wish him farewell.

"*Bo'jour, mon ami.* Many thanks for your kindness, and may *le bon Dieu* protect you," smiled the genial Father Rouvier as he wrung the hand of the trader warmly.

"*Oui, mon ami,*" echoed the high-pitched voice of the tall, attenuated LeRoux. "We will for a long time remember our good cook and his many kindnesses. Next summer we will see you again. *Bo'jour! Bo'jour!* As you say in Eenglish—so-long!"

A crack of the whip and the dogs were off, Father Rouvier loping ahead, breaking trail with his snowshoes. Over the ice boomed a last warning from D'Arcy Arden. "Look out for those Cogmollocks—they're treacherous as hell!"

It was an earthly purgatory all right, that struggle with the frigid forces of an aroused Nature as blizzards of blinding ferocity,

sweeping down from the Polar ice, enveloped the slow-moving men and dogs in a pall of snow till it looked like some ghostly procession of the dead. The only signs of life were the fluffy Arctic foxes that barked shrilly at them from atop the hard-packed drifts, the occasional lone caribou, and the great, gaunt Barren Land wolves that ever hung on their flanks. Night meant a fireless agony crouched in a snow-bank with the thermometer at sixty below and the land an icy hell of howling blackness, their ears ever assailed with the ceaseless dirge of the blizzard.

Upon their vision there broke at last the violet-tinted immensity of the Polar ice stretching on and on till lost in a starlit infinity of blackness. But it heartened the toiling men. Here was the land they sought. The land of ice and of the wild men they had come so far to conquer.

It was on the second day of their travel across the Polar ice that they heard the distant booming of a polar bear-gut drum echoing across the snowdrifts. The rolling rhythm, rising and falling in eerie cadence, seemed fraught with menace.

"*Les sauvages!*" Rouvier turned to LeRoux. "They cannot be far away." Again the mysterious booming pulsed through the Arctic night.

Topping a snow-swept pressure-ridge a weird sight met their astonished eyes. On the moonlit ice, before a circle of dome-shaped igloos, hundreds of shaggy fur-clad figures were leaping and cavorting to the booming reverberations of an immense polar bear-gut drum. It looked at first as though a couple of hundred caribou were executing a ghost dance on their hind legs. Guttural grunts echoed from the lips of the leaping figures as they jerked their long snow-knives of gleaming copper up and down on either side of their heads like horns. Next moment the excited dogs had catapulted into the midst of the wild assemblage.

Around the two lone figures surged a horde of small, Tartar-like men, their gleaming snow-knives pointed threateningly towards them. What murderous intentions they might have harboured were quelled by Father Rouvier. His shining crucifix held aloft in the moonbeams, his sole defence against the physical weapons of barbarism, he faced the shaggy mob, unafraid. Impressed by the white magic they were sure emanated from that little cross that sparkled and scintillated in the moonlight the savages fell back. Suddenly the cowed heads, surmounted with spiked caribou ears, turned towards the igloos.

Down the moonlit lane that opened through the crowd of fur-



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SLARCH PARTA BUCKING OVERFLOW ON MOUNTAIN CRITH



THE RADFORD AND STRETT QUEST—THE STONE AGE "BLONDIE" FAMILIES
Nat. Museum of Canada

clad humanity strode a sinister-faced Cogmollock with a small goatee. The black eyes of the *angatkuk*, or medicine man, regarded the whites with a malign intensity that seemed to probe their very souls. A supernatural stillness suddenly pervaded the Stone Age village, as for the first time in history, white priest and aboriginal medicine man faced each other out there on the ice-fields. That a word from the *angatkuk* would send those wicked fourteen-inch snow-knives plunging into their bodies Rouvier knew full well. Yet he stood there, resolute, gazing boldly into the crafty eyes of the savage, his uplifted crucifix casting back the moonbeams.

At last the *angatkuk* spoke. Brown hands unhitched the dogs and carried bedding and baggage into a rancid-smelling igloo. A broad-faced, good-natured Eskimo signed to the priests to enter. Within they squatted on the snow-shelf, opened a pack and distributed needles, knives and fish-hooks among the motley crowd that filled the place to overflowing. From a stone pot a fat Cogmollock woman in a curious dress of skin hooked out a slab of seal meat and handed it to the visitors. The Cogmollocks had accepted them. They were safe!

That night, as the Aurora danced in wanton abandon across the violet arc of the heavens, enveloping the icy world in a mantle of scintillating glory, there arose for the first time in those eternal solitudes the sonorous and beautiful strains of the *Te Deum*.

A year had passed since Fathers Rouvier and LeRoux had left Fort Norman for the hunting grounds of the Cogmollocks, and the Arctic world into which they had disappeared had preserved a complete and sinister silence regarding them. Father Douchet at Fort Norman had long since expected a report on their progress, which was to have been sent by Eskimo courier to D'Arcy Arden's post and relayed on. But not a word had come to hand. Father Douchet, and, in fact, the whole North, was getting anxious.

D'Arcy Arden was worried, too. The Indian trade at his little Dease Bay post was negligible, for the Indians were afraid to venture into this no-man's-land on account of their fear of their traditional enemies—the Eskimos. At first the redskins had been the sole possessors of firearms and had taken a delight in raiding the camps of the unoffending "Eaters of Raw Flesh", as they called the Huskies, murdering men, women and children,

and carrying off whatever booty they could lay their hands upon. Now, however, that the Eskimos were obtaining modern Winchesters from the traders they were displaying an alarming readiness to carry the war into the enemies' camp, and the Indians gave them a wide berth. Emboldened by the possession of rifles, and anxious to obtain more, the Cogmollocks had, during the last few years, ventured into this proscribed area to trade with D'Arcy Arden and, as a consequence, the Indians had retreated still farther to the southward.

Arden, like Carroll before him, had encouraged the Cogmollocks to make this trip across the divide since there was far more money to be made in dealing with these Stone Age savages than with the more sophisticated Dog-Ribs who, for two centuries, had been in touch with English traders on the Bay. To these visiting Cogmollocks a thirty dollar Winchester rifle sold for from twelve to twenty white fox skins, worth thirty to fifty dollars apiece Outside. A box of cartridges, worth two dollars and a half, sold for one white fox. Consequently when the season drew to a close without a single Cogmollock trading party showing up he had occasion to be worried.

As a stormy winter slipped into still another spring without any sign of the Fathers, or any of the Cogmollocks, D'Arcy Arden's concern turned to grave anxiety. Then, in the middle of March, a band of fur-clad Dog-Ribs, out hunting caribou, drove in with their slat-ribbed dog-teams and set up their conical caribou-skin tepees a short distance from the post.

It was late when D'Arcy got through trading. Yet hardly had his head hit the pillow ere the night became vocal with the howling of a hundred huskies; the short, sharp barks that denoted anger at the presence of unseen strangers. Leaping from his bunk he dived into his ahtegi and hurried out on to the ice.

There, coming across the frozen bay, was a horde of shaggy forms. "*Ah-kan-ah! Ah-kan-ah!*" The guttural greeting boomed across the snow. Next moment the little post was engulfed in a tidal wave of fur-clad humanity and yelping, sharp-eared huskies. The Cogmollocks had arrived!

But not the friendly Cogmollocks of former days. There was something strange and vaguely sinister in their attitude, something almost hostile. His Dog-Rib interpreter was frightened. But that meant little since the two races were never comfortable in the presence of each other. Lighting a coal-oil lantern he led the way to the trading store and proceeded to dispense the usual

hand-out of hard-tack, sowbelly and tea.

Suddenly icy fingers clutched his heart. For around the neck of a swarthy Cogmollock named Hupo was suspended a glistening crucifix, while another savage named Kormik was wearing, over his skin clothing, a black snow-shirt made from a priest's soutane!

Instantly came the realization of his imminent peril.

What could be the explanation? Had the Fathers been murdered, or had the articles merely been stolen? He didn't dare to ask. The slightest sign of suspicion would spell his doom. With tact born of long experience in handling natives he succeeded in keeping them pacified until the trading was all over. The Cogmollocks were grinning when they left. The *Kablunat* had been unusually generous—they'd obtained twice what they'd expected for their furs, and had stolen many things besides.

Days of panic and mystery followed. Twice the Dog-Ribs hurtled into the post, their mahogany faces carved with terror. The woods were full of Eskimos, they said. They were waiting for a chance to fall upon them and destroy them. Even the sled-dogs bore out the fears of their tawny masters by their restlessness, their angry barks and their menacing rushes with upraised hackles and bared fangs into the woods as though some enemy was skulking there.

CHAPTER XVI
SOLVING THE SECRET OF THE ICE-FIELDS

SUPERINTENDENT WORSLEY, Officer Commanding "G" Division of the North West Mounted Police at Edmonton, Alberta, frowned as he read for the third time the grease-stained letter that had just arrived by special courier from Athabasca Landing that April morning. Signed by D'Arcy Arden, and dated at Fort Norman months before, it reported the appearance of Eskimos at his trading post wearing a priest's soutane and a crucifix. It was obvious from Arden's note that he feared the worst.

"Tell Inspector LaNauze I would like to see him," he turned to an Orderly.

A minute later LaNauze entered and saluted. Blue-eyed, bronzed of face, his tall, wiry, broad-shouldered form bespoke at once the athlete and the outdoor man.

"Mr. LaNauze," remarked the Superintendent, "I want you to take Constables Wight and Withers, organize a patrol, and leave first open water for the Arctic. Read this." He handed over Arden's letter.

LaNauze ran his eyes swiftly over the missive. "Very good, sir."

"There's been far too much trouble up there lately," continued Worsley. "Radford and Street killed, and now these priests missing for nearly two years. We've got to bring those Huskies to their senses."

"Yes, sir." LaNauze inclined his head. "It's possible, though, that Arden may be a little premature in thinking they've been killed. These things might easily have been stolen, and the Cogmollocks are notoriously light-fingered—not like the other Huskies. Possibly the priests may have been carried away by their enthusiasm, gone too far east and got marooned somewhere by the ice. That could easily happen. Has happened many times in fact amongst the whalers. I'll make preparations immediately, sir."

The exultant light in LaNauze's eyes wasn't lost on the Superintendent. Worsley knew his man. LaNauze, if anyone, would find those missing priests. Capable of out-travelling the

Indians themselves, knowing the North like an open book, and speaking numerous native dialects, he was the obvious man for this difficult assignment, which would take a couple of years at least and entail thousands upon thousands of miles of arduous travel through territory as yet unmapped.

A couple of months later a sleek, grey-painted Peterborough canoe shot out from the banks of the swift-flowing Peace at the frontier settlement of Peace River Crossing and headed downstream towards its junction with the Slave. Kneeling in the stern, swinging his red-painted paddle as deftly as any redskin, was Inspector Denny LaNauze, and ahead, their paddles keeping time to his own, were Constables Wight and Withers. The search for the missing Fathers was under way!

Surging gracefully down the broad bosom of the majestic Peace with its high yellow cutbanks and verdant, rolling hills, sleeping beneath the starlit canopy of the Northern sky, cooking their bannock and beans over leaping camp-fires as the pearly mists of dawn swirled and eddied over the rippling waters, they reached at last Smith Landing,¹ crossed the portage aboard creaking ox-carts to Fort Smith and boarded the stern-wheeled *Mackenzie River* just as she was about to depart on her annual voyage to the Land of the Midnight Sun. Soon her blunt bow was cleaving the chocolate waters of the Slave.

At Fort Resolution Inspector Rheault came aboard, stepping from a birchbark propelled by a couple of broad-cheeked Dog-Ribs. "The Indians all along the river are scared to death," he told LaNauze. "Some Dog-Ribs came south after camping at D'Arcy Arden's last spring and reported an Eskimo trading party had left Arden's post then sneaked back through the woods and attacked their camp. Got the story from one of the Dog-Ribs who was right there at the time. Said he saw a Huskie wearing a priest's cassock and that there was a bullet hole right through it."

LaNauze's tanned face registered an incredulous but barely perceptible smile. He knew these Indian rumours.

"Yes," Rheault continued. "This business has sure given all the Indians along the river the scare of their lives. As you know, they were always scared of the Huskies, but now . . . You'll have one hell of a time getting Indians to help you into Bear Lake if you figure on using a York boat."

¹ Later named Fort Fitzgerald after Inspector Fitzgerald who perished with his patrol on the Dawson trail.—P.H.G.

The sonorous blast of the siren interrupted further conversation, and with a hasty farewell Rheault hurried down the companionway to his waiting canoe. Soon the steamer was heading out across the blue waters of Great Slave Lake for Deadman's Island.

For days the red paddle-wheel of the steamer continued to thrash the muddy waters into froth, calling at Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, and at the lonely outpost of Fort Wrigley in the shadow of the Rockies. At last the rugged escarpment of Bear Rock towered up out of the water and the wailing blast of the siren and frantic ringing of signal bells announced their arrival at Fort Norman.

Anxiously LaNauze scanned the sea of mahogany faces below for a sight of D'Arcy Arden. Big Tim was there, of course, and Rags Wilson, but not a sign of the man they wanted. Striding down the swaying gang-plank he shook hands with Gaudet.

"Any word of those two Fathers yet, Tim?"

Tim shook his head. "No, monsieur Inspector. Arden, he's ze last man out from Bear Lake. Ze whole t'ing is one big mystery. Nobody he's know a t'ing."

D'Arcy, it seemed, was five hundred odd miles down-river at Fort McPherson. There was only one thing left to do. Continue on aboard the stern-wheeler, pick up D'Arcy Arden as guide, then hire an Eskimo interpreter against the day when they would raid the haunts of these bloodthirsty Cogmollocks. When the warning blast of the *Mackenzie River* echoed back from the Bear Mountains LaNauze skipped swiftly up on the gang-plank and, a few minutes later, was watching the chocolate waters of the river slide swiftly by.

By the time the geese were heading southward the little force was fighting its way tooth and nail against the treacherous rapids of the Bear and struggling in the teeth of howling blizzards which lashed the Great Bear into a frothing spume which froze as it cascaded into the heavy-laden York boat.

At last, through the spinning flakes, they espied the crude log cabins of Arden's trading post, set stark against the snow-filled bay, and grounded the boat before it.

"Guess the only thing left to do is build a cabin and go into winter quarters," suggested LaNauze as dogs, saws, toboggans, sacks of flour and bales of dried meat were piled ashore and covered with tarpaulins. "Should be good fishing in the bay here.

We can put up fish for dog-feed, and cross the divide later when the days are a little longer and sled travelling is good."

For the next few days the solitudes of Great Bear Lake were broken by the ringing sound of axes and the crashing fall of timber. Soon a rough log cabin of unbarked logs rose in a man-made clearing amongst the ancient conifers. Trout and whitefish were hooked and netted in the crystal waters and frozen, or hung on stages. Firewood was cut and hauled; caribou hunted in the woods, and everything made snug and comfortable against the assault of the Frost King.

To the original party had been added Father Frappance; Stefansson's former interpreter—Ilivernik—and his broad-cheeked, fur-clad wife who was to sew their caribou skins into ahtegis, trousers and mukluks with which to face the Arctic blizzards.

As the long winter days dragged by there was much speculation as to the probable attitude of the little brown men across the divide who had won for themselves the unenviable reputation of having an utter disregard for human life and an implacable ferocity. Would they prove hostile? Certainly, from all accounts, they had little cause to love the white man.

On March 29th the stunted spruce woods echoed to the shouts of men, the cracking of dog-whips and the yelping of excited huskies. The day had come for the assault upon the divide. LaNauze gave the word of command. Ilivernik loped ahead, the teams snaked into line and, with their fur-clad leader trudging lightly along on webbed snowshoes behind his loaded toboggan, the patrol headed north towards the Pole.

Again the immutable forces of Nature cracked down on them. Blizzard followed blizzard in endless succession as they attacked the illimitable reaches of the wolf-infested Barrens. Like grey ghosts in a world of misty whiteness they mushed on, silent, weary but invincible. Day followed day in the same monotonous round of trail-breaking, of guiding heavy-laden sledges through snow-filled ravines and over rock-ribbed mountains to the resonant roar of the Coppermine deep in its icy canyon. On the last day of April they careened down the glazed rocks to the foot of Bloody Falls and LaNauze gazed out over an infinity of dazzling whiteness that seemed to have no end—the frozen expanse of the Polar Sea. Somewhere in those endless white wastes lay the key to the secret of the disappearance of the two humans he sought . . . but where?

"Mebbe we find'um Huskie hunt'um seal," suggested Ilivernik, waving a furred arm in a broad arc over the white immensity of the snow-fields. "Seal, he come out of hole now. Huskie, he hunt'um all over."

With Ilivernik crunching ahead and LaNauze, brown and tanned as any Chipewyan, striding tirelessly behind his dog-team, they pushed across the shimmering wastes, their eyes seared with the blinding reflection of the sun upon the burnished snowdrifts.

Suddenly the dogs gave tongue in short, excited barks. Rounding an immense pressure-ridge of green up-ended ice they saw ahead the dome-shaped igloos of a Cogmollock camp. A moment later they had careened into the heart of the village in a frenzied whorl of snarling dogs, tangled harness, angry men and snapping lashes. About them swarmed a horde of greasy Cogmollocks in their queer, fringed swallow-tailed coats of caribou skin. Ilivernik's tongue clicked out a quick flow of explanations and questions.

"Ask them," commanded LaNauze as he squatted on some polar bear-skins within a wet and dripping igloo, "if there are any white men in this country."

"Dey say two white mans dey lib mebbe two sleeps 'cross dere," came Ilivernik's reply as he pointed northward.

"Two white men!" Surely these couldn't be the missing priests.

Though they plied the Cogmollocks with question after question they could get no satisfaction.

"Come on," snapped LaNauze at last. "We're wasting time here. Let's go ahead and look for these two white men."

It was nearing dusk next day when above the drifts the spidery masts and rigging of a snowed-in vessel became silhouetted against the lemon and pink of sunset. LaNauze whipped his dogs across the ice-field. Suddenly he emitted an ejaculation of surprise. Two fur-clad figures had detached themselves from the dark shadows of the hull and were moving towards them. At first they appeared to be Eskimos, but as they drew nearer he observed from their gait that they were white men. Leaping from his sled he brought the dogs to a halt. The men came closer. One was tall and slender, the other shorter and more stocky. His heart leapt within him. It was too dark to recognize the features. Were these the missing Fathers? Had he reached the end of his search at last?

The thick-set man came closer. There was something vaguely

familiar about him. Their hands met. "Corporal Bruce!" exclaimed LaNauze in unfeigned amazement. "What in blazes brought you here?"

"Same errand as yours, sir," replied Bruce casually. "Left Herschel Island last summer. Been travelling ever since. Meet Mr. Chipman of the Canadian Arctic Expedition."

In the warm cabin of the schooner Bruce told of a thousand mile trek along the Arctic coast from Herschel; of his search of the Cogmollock camps for signs of the missing priests; of sleuth work done in the dead of Arctic night in the heart of semi-hostile Cogmollock villages. It was an epic story of a lone Mountie prowling fearlessly through the haunts of the most bloodthirsty savages on the continent for clues concerning men these same Cogmollocks were thought to have murdered.

From his pack Bruce produced a folded garment. It was a priest's cassock. "Found it at one of the camps near Dolphin Union Straits," he announced. Then, one by one, he brought out a tattered Bible, a prayer book, and some pages from the diary of Tom Street, killed by these same people a couple of years before. "I think," he concluded, "that the Huskies at Cape Lambert over here can tell us what we want to know."

Next day they entered a squalid village near the mainland. Once again LaNauze found himself surrounded by a mob of these little Tartar-faced men in skin swallow-tails in an atmosphere thick with the nauseating fumes from the blubber lamps. Cunning eyes watched restlessly as Ilivernik bombarded the greasy gathering with questions.

Suddenly the interpreter's dark eyes widened. His fur-clad body commenced to quiver. "I got'um!" His voice was hoarse with suppressed excitement. "Dese man here—he know all 'bout what happened to dem Fadders."

Then, from the thick lips of a scowling savage with a small goatee and moustache that gave him the appearance of a Spanish buccaneer, tumbled the story of the missing men.

Ensnconced in the snowhouses of the Cogmollocks, Fathers Rouvier and LeRoux soon made friends with their prospective converts and got right down to work. As each diminutive bit of Eskimo humanity came squalling into the icy world one of them was there to sprinkle a few drops of water on its body and perform the rites of baptism. To the Eskimos this "white man's medicine" was amusing. If the *Kablunats* got pleasure from sprink-

ling the faces of their new-born infants with water—well, it would do no harm to humour them. Obviously the white man was inferior to the Eskimo, and had to be treated with tolerance. He couldn't hunt seal for his own sleigh dogs. He floundered helplessly in deep snow, and he couldn't build a snowhouse. But he could trade sharp knives and needles and fish-hooks—articles of incomparable value in native eyes—for seal meat and blubber—and they could consequently afford to overlook the queer ways of these *Kablunats* with their black robes and hairy faces.

Months passed. Tramping the ice-fields in biting cold, the priests visited from camp to camp, ministering to the sick, shriving the dying, and baptizing the new arrivals. Gradually a change came over the Cogmollocks; intangible at first, but none the less real. Eskimos who had previously been friendly turned their heads when they approached. Others showed less willingness to barter their seal and polar bear meat. An undefined hostility seemed to be brewing somewhere in the village. Then one day a child died just as it had been baptized with holy water. An uproar filled the igloo. The white man's "medicine" had done it, howled the bereft mother. Kuliavik, the heavy *Kablunat* with the black beard, was a witch-doctor; a man of evil portent.

Next day Rouvier found that all the white man's treasures in his possession couldn't purchase a pound of seal meat. The priests were being boycotted. Word had gone forth from the *angatkuk* that these men in black gowns were emissaries of the Evil One, that Nulialuk, the underwater goddess, was angry.

That night as the priests lay in their igloo a fur-clad figure wormed its way through the snow tunnel and cautiously closed the door with the snow-block. It was young Iktak, one of Rouvier's staunchest friends and admirers who had often accompanied him on his journeys over the ice-fields. "Kuliavik," came his fear-filled whisper, "Cogmollock, him want for kill you. You no want be killed you take'um dogs and go 'way." A moment later the young Cogmollock had disappeared.

In the frigid darkness of the igloo up there on the roof of the world amongst these superstitious barbarians of the Ice Age the Fathers discussed their perilous position. With heavy hearts they admitted that the baleful influence of the *angatkuks* had defeated them for the time being. There was only one thing left to do. It was spring now, and the days were long. They'd travel overland to D'Arcy Arden's cabin, go on to Fort Norman after break-up and return again when times were more propitious.

They proceeded quietly with their preparations, then lay down to snatch a few hours sleep. In the dim half-light of a frigid dawn, while the hunters were off at the seal-holes, they hitched the dogs to the sled, loaded up already with seal meat supplied by the friendly Iktap, and turned their backs on the inhospitable snowhouses.

Climbing the lofty cliffs of Bloody Falls some sixth sense caused Rouvier to cast a backward glance over his shoulder. Two Cogmollocks were following swiftly on their trail. As they drew closer he recognized the cruel, Mongol-like face of Sinissiak and the pig-like eyes of the burly and treacherous Uluksuk. Rapidly the gap between them lessened till the Eskimos drew abreast. Sinissiak leapt forward. A sinewy hand closed about the rifle and tried to wrest it from beneath the rawhide lashing of the sled.

"Leave that gun alone!" thundered Rouvier, catching the Eskimo's wrist in an iron grasp.

Next moment he was locked in a shaggy embrace. A copper knife flashed in the sun. With a groan Father Rouvier sank, dying, on the snow, his fingers groping for his crucifix.

A hundred yards ahead Father LeRoux, who was breaking trail, halted in confusion and stared back. Suddenly bullets commenced to drop around him. Turning, he began to run. Too late! Sinissiak had got the range at last. A bullet broke his leg. Falling, he lurched to his feet and staggered on till, struck by another, he sat grotesquely on the snow. Then, with copper knives bared, and shouts of Satanic laughter ringing across the drifts, the Cogmollocks crunched towards him. . . .¹

"And where is Sinissiak now?" LaNauze demanded grimly.

"With his tribe in the Land where the Caribou Fawn," answered Keehea.

"And Uluksuk?"

"Him ten sleeps dat way," explained Ilivernik, pointing towards the eastern shore of Coronation Gulf.

Promptly LaNauze snapped into action. By nightfall the expedition had been divided. Bruce, with a Cogmollock guide

¹ Both of the priests were mutilated, their bodies being cut open and their raw livers devoured by the two savages, under the impression that they would thereby acquire some of the knowledge and cunning of the whites. The story related by the natives at Cape Lambert is somewhat at variance with that told by the murderers themselves. For full statement by Sinissiak and Uluksuk, kindly furnished me by Mr. J. E. Wallbridge, K.C., of Edmonton, their defence counsel, see Appendix.—P.H.G.

named Mayuk, was headed north for that dungeon of demons on Victoria Land. And LaNauze, with Ilivernik, was headed for the village of Uluksuk. Within a couple of weeks LaNauze and his puny force had struck two swift, successive blows at the power and insolence of the Cogmollocks.

Up on unmapped Victoria Land Bruce drove his dog-team into a squalid camp of Cogmollocks. With bent bows and drawn snow-knives they surged about him. Mayuk pointed to a seal-skin tupek and made a sign. Diving within, Bruce discerned a Tartar-faced savage squatted on a frozen caribou, repairing a harpoon.

"Come," ordered Mayuk, "the White Chief wants you."

Sinissiak bounded to his feet, his snow-knife flashed back in a fiery arc, its copper point directed at the heart of the hated *Kablunat*. From without came an angry clamour of hoarse voices and a bedlam of howling huskies. Bruce snapped a peremptory command. The furred arm of the savage dropped. The knife clattered to the icy floor. An hour later Sinissiak was being driven south on Bruce's sled—a captive.

Almost within sound of the roar of Bloody Falls LaNauze ran the other murderer to earth. Whipping aside the flap of a sealskin tupek he gazed into the porcine eyes of the portly Uluksuk. The savage eyed him calmly. "I suppose," he said with fatalistic calm, "you've come to kill me."

"No," answered LaNauze, "but I've come to take you to the land of the *Kablunats* where you will be judged for what you've done. Hurry—get your shingabee and things together."

When Stefansson's schooner, *The Alaska*, sailed from Bernard Harbour for Herschel Island in July she carried aboard, apart from her usual crew, LaNauze's party with the Stone Age prisoners and witnesses. Fifteen days later they chugged in to Pauline Cove and Sinissiak and Uluksuk were lodged within the Guard House. It was too late now to catch the river steamer for the Outside. They would, LaNauze realized, have to winter on the Island and move over to Fort McPherson in the spring.

Not till August, 1917, did LaNauze and his dusky entourage step from Old Man Kennedy's stage in Edmonton and the astonished children of the Polar spaces gaze upon the mighty stone "igloos" of the *Kablunats*.

A few weeks later two shaggy prisoners faced the Great White *Angatkuk* in the big stone "igloo" at Calgary. Through most of the trial they slumbered peacefully in the dock, overcome by

the unaccustomed heat. Even the passionate demand of the Prosecuting Attorney for the death sentence was interrupted by the occasional snores of the Eskimos. With casual unconcern they listened as the death sentence was passed upon them.

But, despite their brutal crime, Sinissiak and Uluksuk were not destined to be jerked into Eternity at the end of a hangman's rope. A paternal Government, deciding to be lenient, commuted their sentence to imprisonment in the North, and ere the snow commenced to fly they were aboard a scow in charge of a Mounted Police escort, bound for Fort Resolution, to commence working out their sentence.

But Fort Resolution was little to their liking. The Eskimo hates the wooded country, and always avoids it. He is used to the barren tundra, the limitless ice-fields, and the deep green rollers of the Polar Sea. Here they were situated in the heart of the hunting grounds of their ancestral enemies, the Yellow Knives and Dog-Ribs, who gazed on them with sullen eyes in which flamed age-old hatred. Quick to sense their utter loneliness, Bishop Breynat, whose priests had been the victims of their savagery, suggested to Commissioner Perry that they be transferred to Herschel Island. The following summer, when the *Mackenzie River* arrived, they were carried north to Herschel to become seal hunters for the Police, to the intense indignation of every trader, trapper and beachcomber along the Arctic coast.

"*Hell*," growled old Captain McIntyre, a hard-bitten whaler who knew his Eskimos like an open book, "no good'll come o' this. Them guys at Ottawa is crazy. Now these Huskies'll figger the white man's easy. Mark my words, boys"—he squirted a stream of tobacco juice against the white-painted wall of the barracks—"there'll be hell apoppin' over this!"

CHAPTER XVII THE CLUTCHING HAND

AGAIN the scene changes back to the ice-clad peaks and eternal glaciers of the Yukon. Times had changed since the gold-crazed hordes of '98 had surged across the Chilcoot Pass. No longer did the creek-beds resound to the boom of explosives and the ringing echo of miners' picks. Straw-haired box-crushers and dance-hall girls had gone respectable, married well-to-do miners and now were more exacting about the moral rectitude of their sisters than those who'd never strayed from the straight and narrow path. Dawson's glamorous dance-halls and gambling dens were little but a memory. Only a faint stream of humanity now trickled through to Whitehorse and thence down-river on the stern-wheeled steamers.

Sergeant Lewis McLaughlin of the Royal North West Mounted Police,¹ who'd known the Yukon in its palmy days, was bored. From a lean face, tanned with searing Yukon suns and winter blizzards, his grey eyes rested thoughtfully on the fir-fringed rim of the distant cutbank visible from the window of the Whitehorse barracks. His glance swung to the calendar. June 11th, 1914. "Hell," he muttered, "what a life! Not a confounded thing to do but wet-nurse these drunken Siwash and read the Riot Act to a bunch of Polacks."

His ears caught the tattoo of running feet. The door burst open and into the Guard Room catapulted an overalled youth, his face white and hair dishevelled.

"Quick!" he gasped. "Quick, Sergeant, someone's been killed. We've got him at the wharf. He's liable to get away!"

"Who's liable to get away?"

"The body!" was the astonishing reply. "Jack Seymour's trying to hold him with his pole."

Jamming his broad-brimmed Stetson on his head McLaughlin buckled on his sidearms and swung round the counter. With

¹ On June 24th, 1904, His Majesty King Edward VII granted the Force the prefix of "Royal". In November, 1919, the Canadian Government passed an Act changing the name of the Force to "Royal Canadian Mounted Police" which went into effect on February 1st, 1920.

swift steps he followed the lad through the hot, dusty streets of Whitehorse. Between the white frame buildings flashed the golden flood of the Yukon. A moment later he was elbowing his way through an excited throng that already lined the wharf.

Rising and falling to the rhythmic wash of the water was a shapeless bundle held against the green slime of the pile by a stevedore with his pole. Even as the Sergeant glanced down, a blackened hand arose from the roiled flood and reached towards him with clutching fingers as though in silent supplication.

"Saw it floating by," Seymour's voice arose above the noisy clatter of tongues. "Snaked it in with my pole and slewed it to the bank here. The current nearly carried it away."

Slipping into a canoe McLaughlin steered it between the stern-wheeled *Dawson* and a large red-painted barge. Judging from the blackened hand he concluded that the body must be in an advanced state of decomposition. Placing a guard over it he hurried to the barracks to empanel a coroner's jury.

Already a wave of excitement was sweeping through news-hungry Whitehorse. Already conjecture was rife in every pool-room café and trading store. Old-timers recalled epic cases of the Yukon's palmy days when such a discovery had presaged a startling march of events. Even yet the execution of O'Brien, and the twin hangings of Black Fournier and LaBelle were favourite topics in every bunk-house. And each case had arisen out of evidence the treacherous waters of the Yukon had cast into the arms of the Mounted Police.

As McLaughlin ordered the body lifted from the grip of the muddy waters next morning for the inspection of the coroner's jury he emitted a choked ejaculation of surprise. From feet to shoulders it was encased in a cylindrical binding of poles and saplings lashed lengthwise.

During his ten eventful years in the Yukon the genial, broad-shouldered McLaughlin had earned a reputation for an infinite capacity for taking pains. Now he studied the half-dozen sticks with the experienced eye of the woodsman. One, he noticed, was a spruce pole; two were green willows; two were balm of gilead, and the other was an alder. Willow and alder, he reflected, grew in close proximity to water. Furthermore it was not everywhere that such an assortment of tree growth could be found. He turned his attention to the binding. Around the shoulders was a piece of cod-line, a leather lace was tied about the feet, while about the waist was bound a piece of rope that might have

been cut from the headline of a toboggan. To his amazement he found that, despite the black and decomposed hand, the rest of the body was in an almost perfect state of preservation.

Recovering from his momentary surprise he observed that the victim was a dark-complexioned, middle-aged man of more than average height with a scar across the left cheek-bone. The palm of one hand, which had been resting within the leather waist-belt, was seared as though burned with a swift-moving rope. The clothing, too, proved paradoxical. A winter shirt of heavy flannel above a heavy woollen undershirt covered the upper part of the body, yet the lower limbs not only lacked underwear but were encased only in a pair of light blue overalls. On the feet were thin grey socks and Indian moccasins. A search of the pockets revealed only a pipe, tobacco, some twine, a couple of keys and a heavy clasp-knife.

With knitted brows McLaughlin surveyed the evidence. Something didn't jell. To all appearances the body had been committed to the Yukon's embrace but a short time before. Yet that black, supplicating hand belied it. Then there was the heavy winter undershirt, and the lightly-clad lower limbs.

"Here, Doc," he stepped aside, "give this bird the once-over. Looks like someone's cracked his skull."

"Fractured skull and scalp wounds," announced Doctor Clarke. "I'd say he was killed with repeated blows on the head, and that death occurred," he hesitated, "from three to six weeks ago."

"Yeah! And how about that hand there?"

The Doctor stroked his chin. "Can't quite figure it out, Lewis. Better put him on ice. I'd like to have Doctor Gabie look him over before I report officially."

"Coroner's jury's withholding verdict, sir," McLaughlin informed Inspector Ackland later. "The Doctor thinks that death occurred within the last six weeks."

"No idea of his identity?"

"No, sir. A foreigner—might have met death anywhere along the river south of here. It's a case of murder, of course."

"And your theory?" The curt questions followed each other rapidly, almost brusquely.

"That he was killed in the winter, the body kept frozen and thrown into the river after break-up."

"H'm!" The Inspector pursed his lips in doubt. "And these sticks the body was trussed in? You assume, I suppose, this was



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BLOOD MEN, BY THE LIGHT OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN



ALIGOOMIAK, JUST BEFORE HIS EXECUTION

[Philip Godsell]

done to enable it to be hauled some distance—probably on a sled.”

“Exactly, sir. On a toboggan, a narrow one.” McLaughlin hesitated. “The light lower clothing makes it look like an indoor job.”

Inspector Ackland beat a thoughtful tattoo with his fingers on the desk. “Well, Sergeant, I’m leaving the whole case in your hands. Don’t leave a stone unturned.” He frowned. “We don’t want another epidemic of murders along the Yukon.”

The next few days were barren of result. The Yukon was full of foreigners. There were Swedes, Italians, Russians, and thousands of Southern Europeans who, with railroad work finished to the southward, had herded into the Yukon on the heels of the gold rush and never scraped together enough money to get out. Searching for one foreigner in this polyglot scattering of humanity was very much like searching for a pebble in a muskeg. Where was he to begin? Nobody at Whitehorse, or at any of the up-river detachments or bunk-houses, knew of any missing men.

McLaughlin turned his attention to the traders. These trading stores were the club-rooms of the Silent Places; the clearing houses for every bit of gossip and scandal from one end of the river to the other. His steps brought him to a square-fronted store where he found Jack Wade, the owner, surrounded by a sea of bear and muskrat skins with two mahogany-faced Siwashes looking stolidly on. Wade’s long, horse-like face widened into a welcoming grin.

Under the veiled scrutiny of the long-haired hunters McLaughlin described the victim. “Sorry, Sergeant, don’t mean anything to me,” Wade said. “Maybe he was working in the Pueblo or one of them mines up-river. What’s that?” The Indians were talking excitedly together. “Hold on,” he caught McLaughlin’s arm. “Maybe them Injuns can tell you something.”

The black eyes of the taller Indian met the Sergeant’s questioning. “You say dat feller, him got burned hand—got him cut ’cross face? Me—I’m see him, dat man.”

McLaughlin stiffened. “You did, Joe—where?”

The Siwashes exchanged glances. “I been sell him rabbits last winter,” continued the redman. “Him lib wid ’noder feller in dat li’l shack out near de bush dere. De odder feller, him got only one eye.”

Wade’s eyes were glistening with interest. “Hell,” he cried, “he means that one-eyed bird, Cesari. Him and his pardner,

Dominico Melis, bunked together in the Bissler House last winter. I seen 'em there last February."

"Come on." The Sergeant led the way to where the body was lying and watched intently as Wade studied the marble features. No gleam of recognition appeared in the trader's eyes. The Sergeant swore beneath his breath. Another hope shot. Suddenly Wade gripped his arm. "Sure, I know him now, poor devil. That's Dominico all right . . . partner of that one-eyed cuss Cesari."

Half an hour later the Sergeant stood before a forbidding structure on the outskirts of the town. Hard-boiled though he was through a decade of police work in an austere land where tragedy often struck, he experienced a feeling of revulsion as he gazed at the rough log building; at the partly-fallen verandah, the dirty broken windows and at the general air of sinister desolation that emanated from its grey-brown walls. With one of the keys from the victim's clothes he tried the lock. It didn't work. He tried the other. There was a rusty screech, the bolt shot back, and he stepped into the dim interior.

A few quick steps took him through a living-room with its rough home-made chairs and tables, a bedroom containing a brush-filled bunk and a couple of packing-cases, to an unkempt kitchen in one corner of which was sunk a well. The slanting rays of the midnight sun disclosed bones and refuse on the floor and upon the wall some dark brown marks that looked like bloodstains.

Prying loose a candle from a packing-case he lighted it and scrutinized the marks more closely. Unquestionably they were bloodstains—but they seemed to fall in three parallel splotches down the wall. A second glance showed three nails near the ceiling. He snorted disgustedly. The stains had evidently come from partridges and rabbits hung up to thaw. With a last swift visual inventory he stepped through the door and locked it, glad to fill his lungs once more with pure pine-scented air.

The owner of the Bissler House proved to be Cap Martin, an old-timer and a respected trader. From the Captain he discovered that one half of the building—separated from the other by a locked door—had been rented by a fellow named George Ganley during the early part of the winter. In December, Dominico Melis and Romolo Cesari had rented the adjoining section. Ganley had stayed till the first of the year. The other two, both Italians, had paid their rent to March 1st, but moved

out on February 21st. Cesari Martin described as a chunky fellow of about thirty-five with an easy-going disposition. Dominico was taller, a likeable chap, well-educated, with strong leanings towards mechanics and engineering. He'd left Italy with ample money, but had spent it all on travelling. The two men seemed to be on the best of terms.

Ganley, however, bore anything but a savoury reputation. A hurly, swashbuckling rascal, he'd been engaged in a dozen local fights and brawls, and when drinking was both quarrelsome and abusive. He was also in the habit of frequenting the cabin of Alfred Goss, a place notorious for frequent scenes of riotous revelry. Goss had frequently enjoyed the hospitality of the Mounted Police, his latest appearance at the barracks being as recent as February 8th, when his friend Ganley had bailed him out.

The dark-visaged Cesari was also a frequenter of this bacchanalian abode and, less often, Dominico, and it was whispered that the main attraction was the personable and dark-haired native wife of Alfred Goss.

That the unfortunate Dominico had got in with a gang of rascals seemed obvious. Still there was no apparent motive for the murder. Killings in God's country arose usually from one of two things: jealousy over some beauty of the dance-halls or from that root of all evil—yellow gleaming gold. Could it be possible that the sloe-eyed, cinnamon-cheeked Siwash wife of Goss furnished the clue to the killing of Dominico? Certainly the man did not appear to have any valuables that might have caused him to be singled out as a victim.

With painstaking deliberation the Sergeant continued to trace the shadowy movements of the four men and the girl. Piecing together scraps of information brought him by the underground drag-net which operates silently but effectively wherever there is a Mounted Police detachment in the land, he found that they gradually assumed a pattern which drew Goss and Ganley and Cesari closer and closer, leaving Dominico's movements more hazy till, in February, he dropped completely out of sight.

Ganley had established friendly relations with the two Italians and, following a New Year's celebration, all had left to hunt moose near Lake LaBarge. On February 1st Ganley and Cesari had returned to Whitehorse without Dominico. Four days later Ganley had made a mysterious trip at dead of night into the forest, ostensibly to get a pair of blankets, returning at dawn on the 7th.

Then there had been a row between Goss and his wife and the girl had disappeared. Two weeks later Ganley and Cesari had hit the trail for Dawson. Meanwhile Dominico had vanished into thin air. The Sergeant pondered.

Why had Ganley made this mysterious snowshoe journey at dead of night through the frozen forests? Surely not to get a pair of blankets! One did not choose one of the coldest nights in a bitterly cold winter to go traipsing around the country. There was more behind this trip than met the eye. In face of Dominico's disappearance that journey took on a sinister significance.

That his activities had aroused considerable speculation McLaughlin was well aware. He was equally aware of the fact that speculation meant talk and gossip, and that the four hundred odd miles that separated Whitehorse and Dawson, where Ganley and Cesari were supposed to be, would not prevent the information sifting swiftly through by the mysterious moccasin telegraph. And once these men got wind of Police activities they would, if guilty, disappear completely. Making his way to the telegraph office he wired the O.C. at Dawson to locate Romolo Cesari and George Ganley and have them shadowed. Twenty-four hours later word was flashed back that both men had been located and were being watched.

With the telegram in his hand the Sergeant viewed the case from all its angles. A false move would be fraught with serious consequences both to his own prestige and that of the Force. If he ordered their immediate arrest it would be in direct contravention of the weight of medical evidence. If he delayed, the suspects, becoming suspicious, might dissolve into thin air. That night another wire winged its way along the swaying telegraph line to Dawson. The reply arrived at noon next day: "Ganley and Cesari arrested on charge of murder. Bringing them Whitehorse first boat." It was signed "Sergeant MacBrayne".

CHAPTER XVIII
THE MYSTERY OF THE ONE-EYED MEN

WHEN Doctor Gabie stepped from the river steamer a couple of days later the post-mortem on Dominico was resumed. Anxiously the Sergeant awaited the result, since so much depended upon the Doctor's word. At last Doctor Gabie signified that he was through.

"Well, Sergeant," he explained, "the skull's been shattered by blows from a blunt instrument, and the wounds occurred before death took place." The next words dashed his theories to the ground. "Death occurred six—not more than eight weeks ago!"

Six weeks! Eight weeks! That would be early in April and provide a perfect alibi for Cesari and Ganley already *en route* to Whitehorse under indictment for murder. A half-uttered imprecation escaped him at the thought of the ridicule that would be heaped upon his head, to say nothing of the endless red tape that would have to be disentangled through laying a false charge.

"Say, Doc," the Sergeant scratched his head perplexedly, "isn't it possible that he could have been killed in February and his body kept till break-up then dumped into the river?" Again there flashed before his eyes that blackened hand reaching up from the swirling waters of the Yukon.

"Well—it might," the Doctor smiled indulgently. He didn't share McLaughlin's theory.

The Sergeant wrestled with his own uncertainties. Had he been on the wrong track after all? Was there, somewhere along the Yukon valley, a killer whose identity he didn't even suspect? To suit his own hypothesis he'd completely disregarded the probable outcome of the autopsy, convinced of the significance of that blackened hand. How could he hope to convince any jury now of the guilt of Ganley and Cesari against the weight of medical evidence. His assumption that the body had remained frozen and been consigned to the river at open water had, he realized, two weaknesses. In the first place it implied a confederate in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, to have simply thrown the body on the ice of the river or a tributary stream would not have kept

it in a state of preservation. The hot spring sun, beating down with merciless ferocity upon the melting ice, would quickly have caused decomposition. Yet there *must* be an explanation.

Next morning he called on Cap Martin. By moccasin telegraph had come whispered word that, hanging from the rafters of the store, was a sack containing belongings of Dominico. Rumour proved correct. He found himself examining a blunt Hudson's Bay axe, a yellow slicker, and a pair of tall boots bearing a large dark stain.

Martin flicked a soiled letter from his desk. It was from Cesari requesting that the sack and contents be sent to him at Dawson. Though undated, the Captain recalled receiving it around the first of April.

"But you didn't send the stuff?"

The trader shook his head. "To *blazes* with him," he growled. "He didn't send the price."

"Say," suggested the Sergeant, "I'd like to take a squint at your transactions with these birds."

Cap Martin passed over a blotter. The Sergeant thumbed through the neatly-written pages. It was obvious that the Captain was a careful man. Absorbed in the pencilled entries he flung a sidelong glance at the trader.

"Look here," he snapped, "Cesari and Dominico got their grub jointly till February 4th. Then Dominico took his stuff alone. Then—two days later—Cesari buys an almost identical order." His eyes bored questioningly into Martin's.

The trader thumbed some tobacco into his pipe. "Yes," he recalled, "I wondered about that myself. Dominico didn't say anything. But the other fellow acted sort of queer. Do you know, I had a sneaking idea that for some time he was after Dominico's gun."

"Gun?"

"Sure. A fancy twelve-gauge double-barrelled L. C. Smith. I ordered it specially for him from Seattle. Two or three times Cesari asked what I'd get him one like it for, only he didn't have the price."

"Once again, Cap. When did you see Dominico last?"

The Captain puffed thoughtfully on his pipe. "When I filled that order. Before that he used to come over, sit on the counter there, and speak of some eternal motion machine that was going to work without steam or electricity. He and the one-eyed Dago were working on the invention together."

"You don't mean a *perpetual* motion machine!" McLaughlin laughed.

The Captain nodded. "Fighting Mike Sennitt told me Cesari was scared Dominico would slip one over on him and get a patent on the contraption behind his back." He laughed. "He told Mike he'd plugged it so it wouldn't work."

McLaughlin's eyes were shining. An invention—a perpetual motion machine of all things up here in the howling wilderness. Could this possibly have provided the missing motive; a motive strong enough to drive a man to murder? Unknown forces seemed at last to be directing him with the cumulative strength of a growing torrent towards his objective. He shot a further telegram to Dawson, asking them to locate, if possible, a twelve-gauge double-barrelled L. C. Smith shotgun believed taken north by Ganley or Cesari.

Again the Sergeant ransacked the Bissler House, this time with Constable Mapley, and in broad daylight. Once more he centred his attention on the bloodstained kitchen wall.

"Look!" Mapley pointed to faint, almost indistinguishable marks on the rough board floor. "Seems like some of this blood's been tracked from the kitchen into the living-room." He examined the lower wall more closely. "See—someone's attempted to wash it off here. Queer," he mused, "since the rest of the place's so doggone dirty they should have bothered to wash this!"

"Damned queer!" McLaughlin whipped a knife from his pocket. "We'll send these stains to Regina for analysis."

While the red-painted paddles of the *Whitehorse* were forcing the stern-wheeler against the Yukon's turgid current, bringing the prisoners hourly nearer, the Sergeant received a reply to his latest wire to Dawson. A twelve-gauge shotgun answering his description had been found in the possession of a miner on Eldorado Creek. The shoulder-plate was broken, there were dents in the left barrel, and it had been filed off ten inches from the muzzle. It had been purchased recently from a one-eyed man—name unknown.

Exultantly McLaughlin tossed the slip of yellow paper across to Mapley. "Read that," he said and chuckled softly.

With scarlet and white pennants fluttering in gay abandon, and red paddles flailing the emerald waters into a cascade of silvery spray, the *Whitehorse* emitted a sonorous blast of welcome and swung in towards the wooden wharf where Sergeant Mc-

Laughlin stood amid a throng of flannel-shirted miners, Russians, Swedes and Orientals. The gang-plank thudded ashore and Sergeant MacBrayne of Dawson, tall, clean-shaven and tanned, moved with agile step towards him, shepherding ahead two handcuffed figures. McLaughlin eyed them with keen interest.

"Well," he ejaculated, "I'll be damned!" Both prisoners were one-eyed men!

Back at the barracks MacBrayne talked things over with McLaughlin. Ganley had done considerable talking when arrested. He and Fighting Mike Sennitt, he said, had occupied the Bissler House till mid-November, when Sennitt had pulled out. Then he'd become friendly with Cesari and Dominico. The three of them had gone on a hunt to Lake LaBarge, then worked for a while at the Pueblo Mine just south of Whitehorse. The two Italians had quarrelled constantly over some machine they'd invented, so, on February 1st, he'd left them. On the trail he'd been overtaken by Cesari, who suggested that if they fixed Dominico no one would be the wiser and the secret of the invention would remain safe in his possession. A passing Police sled had relieved Ganley of his pack and brought it in. That night, February 3rd, Ganley had bunked on the floor of Cesari's place while Dominico, who'd returned from the mine, had slept in an armchair in the kitchen. A few days later Dominico had returned to Pueblo Mine and, on the 21st, Ganley and Cesari had hit the trail for Dawson.

"O.K." McLaughlin brought his fist down on the table. "And does Ganley explain leaving the Bissler House at midnight February 5th to go and get his blankets? And why did he pick up his pack from the barracks on the morning he got back, and draw all his money from the bank? It's from that time Dominico passed out of the picture as far as I can gather. Come on," McLaughlin pushed back his chair, "let's have a talk with those birds right now."

Ganley, a swashbuckling giant of huge frame and leering eye, received his visitors with a torrent of vituperative abuse. Interspersed with bursts of profanity he repeated the story he'd already told MacBrayne. But regarding his midnight trip to get his blankets he remained stolidly uncommunicative. He admitted that after Goss and his wife had quarrelled he'd given her the money to take the train to Skagway.

Cesari, on the other hand, displayed a ready willingness to

talk and seemed, in fact, eager to get everything off his mind. A short, rather stocky fellow in his thirties, with regular olive features and crisp, curly black hair, his single eye alone gave a sinister aspect to an otherwise pleasant countenance.

"And what happened to Dominico?" McLaughlin fixed his grey eyes on the lone orb of Cesari.

The Italian's response was prompt and ready. "He left on February 4th to go back to the Pueblo Mine—I never seen him afterwards. After that I bought my own grub and batched it here till I went to Dawson."

"And how about Dominico's slicker, and the axe and boots? You wrote Cap Martin to send them on to you at Dawson, knowing that they were Dominico's property." He watched Cesari closely.

"Well—I guessed he didn't want them."

"And the gun you sold at Dawson!" prompted McLaughlin.

"He gave me that to pay part of what he owed me for his grubstake. Most of the time I paid the store bills."

McLaughlin studied the suave, sinister-eyed figure before him. "Tell me, Cesari, how did that gun get smashed?"

The Italian's white teeth flashed in a smile. "Dominico, he got snow down the barrel. It burst, and he dropped it on the rocks and broke the butt."

"So you filed the end of the barrels off. What did you do with the piece?"

"I . . . er . . ." his lone eyelid flickered. "I threw it in the snow up near the mine."

"Think again. Ganley says you threw it away twenty miles down-river."

Cesari leapt to his feet. "Ganley's a liar," he snarled with the ferocity of a tiger brought to bay.

Back in his room McLaughlin filled his pipe and gazed across the table at MacBrayne.

"Mac, I'm satisfied one of these two birds is the man we're after, but I've a lot of evidence to get yet. Take this mysterious trip of Ganley's for his blankets," he laughed thinly, "and the disappearance of Dominico about that time. Then Cesari tells this cock-and-bull story about the broken gun and admits sending for the boots and slicker of the murdered man. Both of 'em are lying."

"Supposing," grinned MacBrayne, "those blankets *didn't* belong to Ganley. Supposing that he stole them. . . ."

Next morning McLaughlin made a discovery which completely dissipated his suspicions regarding Ganley's midnight trip. Dominico had definitely been seen in Whitehorse on the evening of February 6th. Then Ganley admitted he'd stolen the blankets from the cache of Siwash Joë and was afraid the Police would get him. Once again the weight of evidence seemed to swing towards Cesari.

Into the Guard Room was ushered a big, uneducated hulk of a man with broad shoulders, sandy hair, wide mouth and calloused hands. Fighting Mike Sennitt had been located at a wood-camp.

At first he displayed a stubborn disinclination to talk or answer questions. Finally he admitted having batched at the Bissler House with Ganley. "I left it before them other guys moved in," he admitted. "That George Ganley was such a dog-gone ornery cuss I jest had to leave 'im." Once started he talked freely.

Late on the night of February 19th he'd trudged into Whitehorse and, finding the cafés closed, had called at Ganley's part of the Bissler House. There was nobody there; no signs in the snow in front of the door of anyone having gone in or out. Yet the snow around the Italian's door was trampled as though from a recent scuffle. Next night he'd called at Goss's, looking for Ganley, whom he found eventually in the back part of the Bissler House alone.

"He seemed madder'n hell when I told him I'd called the night before," continued Mike. "Asked what in hell had brought me into town. Wanted to know what I meant by snoopin' 'round the cabin."

McLaughlin nodded encouragement.

"Well—when I told 'im I'd jest dropped in for a hunk o' ban-nock an' a cup o' tea he called me a liar an' said I knew too much—it was time someone was puttin' me away. When I asked where the Dagoes was he seemed to git more riled than ever. Said one of 'em was here an' t'other was likely at the bottom o' a sink-hole an' if I didn't keep my mouth shut I'd follow 'im there too."

"And then what? "

"I figgered he'd got one of 'em ornery fits again. I said Dominico was bughouse to go lookin' up that way for pay-dirt. Then," added Mike dramatically, "he grabbed an axe an' took a swing at me. I seen him comin' an' ducked outside. He started

to follow, bellowin' his head off, then seen some guys an' beat it back to the shack, cussin' like the devil. Seems to me as how this Ganley was coverin' somethin' up when I stepped in on 'im."

With aggravating persistency the accumulating evidence was still shuttling back and forth 'twixt Ganley and his one-eyed partner. But still McLaughlin had failed to offset the medical evidence of the Coroner.

In desperation he turned to Siwash Joe. Drawing from the pocket of his scarlet tunic a folded piece of paper he opened it carefully and displayed to the alert eyes of the redskin a small quantity of bluish earth.

"You know this country, Joe. Can you tell me where this blue mud came from?"

For some time Joe puffed owlishly upon his pipe. At last he expelled a cloud of acrid smoke. "Mebbe," he suggested, "you catch'um up 'bove Miles Canyon. 'Bove de rapids on dis side ob de ribber. Dat very soft blue mud dere. No odder place I know of."

An hour later McLaughlin was striding southward along the rim of Miles Canyon, carrying a pack-sack on his back and in his hand a number of slender sticks. Behind him trudged Constable Mapley.

Returning two weeks later McLaughlin intimated to Inspector Ackland that he was prepared to proceed with the case. Subdued excitement permeated the barracks as preparations were hurried forward for the trial. But to all inquiries the Sergeant preserved an inscrutable and enigmatic silence.

On September 24th, before a gathering of high-booted miners, bewiskered sourdoughs, and a scattering of Italians and Swedes, Cesari stepped jauntily into the dock and entered an emphatic plea of not guilty to the charge of murdering his partner, Dominico Melis.

As Prosecutor J. P. Smith opened the case for the Crown an expectant hush filled the hall. At the conclusion of his address it was humming with excitement. For he suggested that the entire Court accompany him on a short journey necessary to the understanding of the evidence to be presented. He wished the Court also to study attentively the meteorological observations regarding the action of the Yukon River between freeze-up in October, 1913, and break-up on April 21st following. Between these periods the water had fallen 44.5 inches—practically four feet.

Between April 21st and June 11th, when the body was discovered, the water had risen 31.7 inches, nearly three feet.

With the consent of Justice MacAuley the Court filed out, climbed aboard the waiting wagons and were soon being jolted across the Whitehorse portage. Beyond the rotting wooden tramway which once had carried boats and belongings of gold-crazed Argonauts they left the wagons and followed McLaughlin along a narrow bush trail thick with alder and willow and dotted here and there with spruce and balm of gilead. Halting, the Sergeant pointed to some slightly weathered tree-stumps.

"These sticks, gentlemen, which I have in my hand," he said, "are the ones that were trussed around the body of the murdered Dominico Melis. And each one of them, you'll observe, fits one of these corresponding stumps here, from which they were originally cut. Not only that—but you'll also notice the notches in Cesari's axe here correspond with the scratches on the bark."

Striding along a narrow trail he reached the river bank at last and pointed down below. "At the foot of that bank is a particular type of blue mud, found only in this one spot along the entire Yukon—different entirely from the sand and silt of the regular channel. It's identical with this clay," he produced an envelope from his pocket, "which I took from the hair of Dominico Melis."

"Despite the weight of medical evidence," continued the Sergeant, "I felt certain Dominico was killed some time in February, and that his body had been preserved by being kept frozen. The rise and fall of the river, with these stumps and blue clay, now make the explanation simple. The ice froze two feet thick at high water level of freeze-up. As the water fell this shore-ice caved in, leaving caves and cavities of ice into which a human body could easily be tossed and remain unseen through the spring heat, and in a perfect state of preservation. As the snow in the mountains melted the spring floods raised this ice and carried down-stream whatever lay beneath it. Dominico was struck on the back of the head by Cesari in the Bissler House at Whitehorse on the evening of February 19th, hauled out here on a toboggan and hidden in an ice cavity right below where you are standing. That, gentlemen, is the explanation of how the body came to be so well preserved."

"In that case," interposed a doubting juror smugly, "how did the one hand come to be so black and decomposed?"

"Because it was outstretched near a crack in the ice—the only part of the body to come into direct contact with the hot rays of the sun!"

Back once more at Whitehorse the Prosecuting Attorney wove into a damning pattern the evidence so painstakingly gathered by McLaughlin. Melis had been struck down by the butt of his own L. C. Smith gun as he slept in the chair in Cesari's to remove forever his claim on the perpetual motion machine. The blood-stained back of the chair was produced, together with Cesari's notebook wherein was a crude but unmistakable plan of the area where the body had been concealed beneath the piled-up ice.

In a last desperate attempt to save Cesari Defence Attorney J. A. W. O'Neill sprang to his feet. "I demand the production of the analyst's report on the bloodstains," he thundered.

"I suggest you don't press for admission of this evidence," suggested Chief Justice MacAuley icily.

O'Neill pounded the table. "*I demand it!*"

The Judge nodded. Into the witness-box strode McLaughlin. In crisp tones the Sergeant read a telegram: "Medical report on all samples mailed from Whitehorse are those of human blood."

"Guilty!" came the low verdict of the foreman two hours later, and upon the hushed court-room fell the ominous words of the death sentence.

"Hell!" screamed the prisoner, beside himself with fury, "you can take me out and string me up *right now!*"

Ganley was released and entirely exonerated from any connection with the murder.

As winter roared down from the Pole, and blizzards shrieked with ghostly voices around the eaves of the death-cell, Cesari's bravado changed to cringing terror. His mind became unhinged and the Death Watch was discontinued.

At six p.m. on February 15th Constables Hayes and York were preparing Cesari for bed. Kneeling before him York was taking off his leg-irons. Suddenly Cesari leapt to his feet, crashed the table down upon them and next moment was speeding down the corridor. Out into the courtyard, and across the violet-tinted snowdrifts, he sped towards the protecting darkness of the woods with Hayes and York in hot pursuit. The alarm gong was clanging violently. Mounted Police spilled out on to the snow, buckling on their holstered side-arms.

"Stop!" roared Hayes.

The prisoner kept on running. The protecting shadows of the

forest were already looming close ahead when Hayes' gun spat fire. Four times the short, sharp bark of the revolver echoed over the empurpled drifts. The shadowy figure crumpled in a screaming heap. The gallows had been cheated. A Police bullet had dealt out justice to the murderer.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SEA WOLF RETURNS

THE successful navigation of the North-West Passage by the redoubtable Roald Amundsen in his little sixty-foot fishing-boat, *The Gjoa*, in 1905—the year that Captain Klengenberg made his famous voyage on the *Olga*; the widely-heralded discovery of the so-called “Blonde” Eskimos by Stefansson five years later; the publicity given to the North and Arctic by Inspector French’s patrol in search of the missing Radford and Street, and LaNauze’s dramatic arrest of Sinissiak and Uluksuk up on the very roof of the world, had caused the eyes of Canada to turn northward to her vast, and almost untrodden, Empire of the Snows.

Here, along the rim of the Arctic, were tribes of hitherto unknown Eskimos to be exploited; a race of primitive Stone Age savages to be trained and moulded into pouring a stream of furry wealth into the laps of those willing to brave the bitter cold and isolation of the Arctic.

The challenge was promptly met, and the ensuing stampede into the Central Arctic resembled, on a small scale, the inrush of adventurous *coureurs de bois* into the forested haunts of the Hurons, Ottawas and Pottawatamies in the early days of the French regime. Those who were fortunate enough to own schooners braved ice and tempest and the copper-pointed arrows of savage Cogmollocks to reach this Arctic Eldorado. Those less fortunate followed the route taken by LaNauze across Great Bear Lake and over the rocky divide to Coronation Gulf.

Meanwhile the Hudson’s Bay Company, whose Indian trade was rapidly shrinking through the penetration of civilization into the hunting grounds of the Indian tribes to the southward, saw in the Arctic an opportunity to throw up new fur posts and extend their field of operations. Here were new natives with whom to trade; natives whose Arctic foxes would be a welcome addition to the dwindling stream of Indian furs that found their way annually to the capacious warehouses in London.

Commissioner R. H. Hall of the Company lost little time in organizing an expedition. Chris Harding, veteran factor of the

"Company of Adventurers" who had spent many years at Fort Resolution and other posts in the Mackenzie valley, was ordered to proceed northward by the Bering Straits and plant the red flag of the fur company along the barren shores of the Western Arctic.

On August 16th, 1915, the *Ruby* nosed her way through the ice-pans into the harbour at Herschel Island and Captain Cottle commenced to unload building materials and trading supplies. Accompanying Chris Harding were Swogger Hendrickson and Rudolph Johnson as helpers, while he had also brought with him a small but staunch little motor schooner, the *Fort McPherson*, with which he proposed to push the Company's trade eastward into the land of the Cogmollocks. Within a few weeks there arose, a hundred yards east of the whitewashed buildings of the North West Mounted Police, a frame trading store and dwelling, northernmost post of the Hudson's Bay Company at the time.

Where Klengenberg had pioneered there now arose one trading post after another, first at Baillie Island, then Fort Bacon on Bernard Harbour, and finally Tree River, sixty miles east of the Coppermine, all flying the red banner bearing the white letters "H.B.C." The fingers of Klengenberg's commercial rival were beginning to close around the frosty empire he had schemed and fought for.

But the indomitable Dane, though he reached Point Barrow completely broke after his acquittal by the San Francisco court, smiled sardonically. He wasn't beaten yet. He'd develop this human gold-mine to the eastward yet in spite of hell and high water!

Embarking in a battered whaleboat with his Eskimo wife and hybrid family, he came upon the *Duchess of Bedford*, of the Leffingwell Arctic Expedition, frozen in the ice. "Borrowing" her, and trading a few furs for rifles, ammunition, and four cases of kerosene for use in his Primus stove, he fought his way through the floe-ice till the familiar headland of Herschel Island loomed up once more before him. Hardly had he stepped ashore than he locked horns once again with his old acquaintances—the Mounted Police.

"I had never heard of such a thing as collection of custom duties from a poor man," he said with some asperity. "But the Police had a lot of rules to go by, and were taking no chances by trying to make reasonable those Ottawa regulations. Apparently they were there to make it hard for any trader trying to enter

the Canadian Arctic who was not a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company. They certainly made it hard for me. My meagre outfit was appraised at topnotch price. The Police happened to be out of kerosene and wanted my four cases. I would not sell them as, without them, my Primus stove was of no value to me. We wrangled and when they saw that I would not sell they charged me so much duty on everything it took almost every cent of ready cash I had to satisfy them."

Perhaps, recalling the character and previous record of the ubiquitous Captain, the Mounted Police had reasons of their own for not welcoming with open arms his reappearance in Canadian territory.

Learning that a scow had come down the Mackenzie and been abandoned as unseaworthy along the coast, Klengenberg located the rickety craft and assumed possession. Steeping a mast, fortifying the sides with thick planks, and pounding out a centreboard from a coal-oil drum, he shot some caribou and seal, dried the meat, loaded his family aboard and put to sea, undaunted.

Hardly had he embarked than he was caught in the grip of a terrific autumnal blizzard. Drenched to the skin with the icy waters Klengenberg and Gremnia fought the fury for three days and three long, sleepless nights and, by some miraculous intervention of Providence the flimsy craft survived the storm. Winter found them stranded like the Swiss Family Robinson. Hunting, fishing and trapping they managed somehow to keep body and soul together. With the approach of summer he made for the wrecked whaler, the *Alexander*, dismantled her, rigged up a deck-house and another mast; reinforced the hull of his rotting scow, angled across the rip-currents of ice-filled Dolphin Union Straits and rammed the snub-nose of his unique and unwieldy craft against the ice-encrusted shore of Rymer Point, eight hundred miles east of Herschel Island. He had reached Victoria Land—home of the "Blonde" Eskimos!

With naught but his wits, a few bullets, and infinite courage with which to face the Arctic winter which soon would come screaming down with fierce intensity from the Pole, he had deliberately marooned himself in this treeless land of utter desolation. Again, with the ever faithful Gremnia, he hunted the seal, the caribou and the polar bear, jerked the meat, Indian fashion, and stored the blubber in pokes of sealskin. But how and where was he to get a trading outfit? Of money he had none. And

without goods of some kind how could he expect to acquire white fox pelts from the Eskimos?

Sinking redly in the west the sun departed for the winter. Arctic night again cast its purple cloak athwart the land. Blizzards of weeks duration shrieked out their demoniacal fury, clawing savagely at the frail hut they called their home, converting the world about them into a frigid hell of seething whiteness. Ice piled upon ice, bridging Victoria Land with the mainland. Over there, at Bernard Harbour—sixty miles to the south-east, dwelt Cogmollock Pete, his old shipmate, factor at Fort Bacon for the company that was trying to wrest his empire from him.

When the fury of the Arctic had abated somewhat Klengen-berg hitched up his dogs and drove across the sea-ice to the post. Cogmollock Pete greeted him with a hoarse shout of welcome. In the puny quarters of Fort Bacon they exchanged snooze, toasted each other in potent rum, and talked over old times with the fervidness born of isolation. With casual eyes the Captain surveyed the rich array of trade goods on Pete's shelves. Just the stuff he needed to build up trade with the Cogmollocks. A crafty gleam shone in his eyes as Pete at last commenced to display signs of growing intoxication.

"They tell me, Pete," he put out a casual feeler, "as how a bunch of Liebes' traders is coming up to Victoria Land to trade with our Cogmollocks."

Pete cocked his ears. "The hell you say!"

The Captain nodded seriously. "I've been thinking, Pete, you and I—we're old shipmates—we oughter stick together and squeeze these here *cheechakos* out. Hell," he added magnanimously, "I'd even be willing to take over a little outfit of trade goods for you to Rymer Point and sell 'em on commission. Anything to help a shipmate out."

Befuddled now with the heady fumes of rum, and dominated by the aggressive character of his crafty companion, Pete slammed down his pannikin and reeled over to the warehouse with the Captain at his heels, his shrewd eyes twinkling. When, next day, Klengen-berg departed for Rymer Point his komatik was piled high with trade goods, while another load awaited his return.

Up on Victoria Land he did a thriving trade. Soon the Dane's goods were keeping the Cogmollock trade from the very firm that owned them. When the long dreary winter drew to a

close the Captain paid a visit to his shipmate. Cogmollock Pete was sore. "These damn Huskies," he complained, "they ain't bin huntin'. I ain't done half the trade I should."

Klengenberg exuded sympathy. Then, from within his wol-verine-trimmed ahtegi he drew a grease-stained scrap of paper and pushed it across the table. "Jest throw your lamps on that," he suggested. "Didn't do too bad a trade myself last winter."

As he scanned the list of polar bear and fox skins Pete's mouth sagged open in surprise. "*Yesus!*" he drawled. "You've sure done one big trade. Come on," he heaved himself to his feet, "let's go down to your boat. I'll get my Huskies to carry up them furs." He made towards the door.

"Not so fast, Pete. Not so fast." Klengenberg eyed him cannily. "I left them skins over at my place on Rymer Point till we settle up the little matter o' prices."

"PRICES!" Pete's bovine face registered shocked incredulity. "What in hell d'ju mean—*prices*? You get ten per cent, that's all. *Ten per cent o' the cost o' the goods what you traded!*" His voice ended in a hoarse note of anger.

This time Klengenberg's granite face registered stony disapproval. "Listen, Pete, them foxes is worth an average o' thirty bucks apiece to me. Six thousand dollars for the bunch. I'll take the price in drafts, or cash. And no monkey business neither."

Pete's face was livid. "You . . . You . . ." For a moment he was speechless. "*God damn you*, Charlie, your commission's only ten per cent. That's sixty dollars—and them furs belong to me. Hear that?" he roared in futile anger.

Klengenberg heaved a sorrowful sigh. "Pete," he remonstrated, "I allus did figger you wus an onreasonable cuss, and now I know it. Sixty dollars for workin' for you all winter! And feed myself, too!" He picked up his battered nautical cap and jammed it on his bony head. "But don't worry—you ain't goin' to lose nothin' on me. I'll meet Liebes' ship from 'Frisco over at Baillie Island after break-up, get the price I'm figgerin' on, and pay you the six hundred bucks for them goods you loaned me. That," he grinned, "will save you the commission." Next moment he was gone.

Late the following August Klengenberg chugged back to Rymer Point aboard a two-masted motor schooner he'd secured on credit from the visiting American trading vessel, and a trading

outfit purchased with the furs secured from the goods that Pete had "loaned" him. From that time on the Captain's influence with the Cogmollocks increased by leaps and bounds, to the vast discomfiture of his shipmate and the other traders on the mainland.

Winchester rifles continued to be the best seller until every Eskimo owned one and the lucrative trade had reached the saturation point. Costing around thirty dollars, and selling for from twelve to twenty white fox pelts apiece, there was money in handling these firearms—six hundred to eight hundred dollars clear profit on each. Determined to revive this profitable trade, Klengenberg imported steel ramrods from Seattle, distributed them amongst his Stone Age customers and told them to scrape the barrels of their rifles to clean the powder out. Soon the delicate rifling was destroyed. New firearms were needed and trading went on merrily as before.

Meanwhile the increasing penetration of the white race into the Central Arctic, the predatory nature of the Cogmollocks, the tremendous cost of overland patrols, and the necessity for providing these pioneering whites with some measure of protection, caused the Commissioner to decide on establishing a permanent detachment somewhere in the heart of Coronation Gulf.

For this duty Staff-Sergeant Clay was selected. Clay was an old friend of mine whom I first met at Fort St. John in the Rockies in the summer of '13 after he had undoubtedly saved the life of factor Fox at Fort Graham when the Sickannies were preparing to raid the post because he'd refused to give them all the fur debt they wanted. Fox already had a small canoe loaded with blankets and provisions, secreted beneath the willows in preparation for an attempted escape, when Clay happened along, read the riot act to the angry Sickannies and issued a salutary and effective warning. A few years later I came across him again at Grande Prairie after his single-handed arrest of four armed desperadoes from across the line and his seizure of eighty gallons of firewater they were smuggling into the Indian reserve at Sturgeon Lake. Equally at home among the snow igloos of the Huskies, guiding a frail birchbark through the froth and spume of tumbling rapids, or handling a bunch of refractory Indians, his iron constitution and bulldog tenacity had carried him through hardships that would have wrecked a man of less remarkable physique.

By this time the Government had decided that Sinissiak and Uluksuk, murderers of the two priests, now fat and sleek as polar

bears from their sojourn at Herschel Island, had been sufficiently punished and that the time had come to return them to their people. Consequently when Clay departed from Fort McPherson on July 21st, 1919, for Herschel he was under orders to escort them back to Coronation Gulf.

A serious hitch occurred when the ship from Vancouver failed to arrive with the building materials for the new barracks. Nothing daunted, Clay foraged around, picking up scraps of lumber here and sheets of corrugated iron there, "rustled" dogs and provisions and, with Constables Cornelius and Brockie, sailed nonchalantly away.

Ere the winter snows had fallen they had, with the assistance of the two Eskimos, erected on a rocky point near the mouth of the Tree River a low-roofed barracks about fifteen feet wide and eighteen feet in length, size being a consideration since coal cost two hundred and fifty dollars a ton laid down at this distant outpost of Empire. Against one end they erected a lean-to storehouse, where ammunition and supplies were stored.

Despite the pious hopes of the authorities that the return of Sinissiak and Uluksuk would "exert a salutary influence as they would be able to inform their tribe of the power and justice of the Government" the effect was exactly as Clay, himself, and every beachcomber and trader had anticipated—very much the reverse.

Hardly had Clay settled down in his new barracks at Tree River than murder raised its ugly head again. As soon as the ice had set he was driving his dogs towards the rock-walled Coppermine to round up a Cogmollock named Ahtak who had casually stuck his snow-knife into the vitals of Agluetuk as the result of a misunderstanding over a woman. Other murders, reported to the northward, had sent Cornelius and Brockie to the barren wastes of Victoria Land to investigate the rumours.

Spring saw Clay and Cornelius urging their dog-team across the deep snows of the coastal divide to carry the mail to Fort McPherson and report progress. Caught by the break-up near Fort Franklin they waded and dragged their wet toboggan across the flooded portages and reached Fort Norman, exhausted, to find the post entirely destitute of provisions.

"It was a tough trip, all right," Sid Clay admitted when our trails crossed that summer at Fort McPherson. "Figured on having a real blow-out when we reached Fort Norman, but Tim was out of grub, and we had to fish and rustle a living like a couple

of damned Dog-Ribs. At open water we followed the ice down in an old scow right after break-up, piled up on an ice-jam and had to hop from one floating ice-pan to another till we managed to make the shore. The rest of the way we hoofed it."

Under the mellowing influence of Old Man Firth's hospitality Clay waxed reminiscent.

"Yes," he admitted when the conversation turned to the natives of Coronation Gulf, "they're a tough bunch, those Cogmollocks. They'd slit your throat for a box of cartridges. Since old Klink, and Billie Philipps at Fort Bacon, started trading with them every mother's son from six to sixty's got a Winchester rifle. And, let me tell you, they're sure cleaning up on those caribou. Slaughtering them by the thousands, leaving the meat to rot and bartering the skins for seventy-five cents each with the traders. Time something was being done. If I don't miss my guess we're going to have trouble with those birds yet."

Six months later I recalled these words as I crouched over a smoky camp-fire on the banks of the frozen Mackenzie a day's journey south of Fort Good Hope. At Fort Norman I had run across my old trail companion, Corporal Doak, and we had agreed to travel together and take turns breaking trail. We had just finished our supper, and fed the dogs, and the genial Corporal was entertaining myself and my Indian dog-runners with stories of his experiences amongst the Huskies. It was bitterly cold.

As we huddled before the blaze with burning faces and our backs almost freezing, the trees would explode from time to time with reports like rifle shots, while the smoke ascended in thick white coils above the silvered tops of the snow-encrusted pines. The talk turned to the killing of Rouvier and LeRoux, as Doak had been one of the guards over the prisoners at Herschel.

"You know," he remarked in an unusually serious strain, "ever since Sinissiak and Uluksuk were taken on that joy-ride to Edmonton and Calgary, shown the white lights and picture shows, and given a couple of years as Police interpreters at the island, I've expected trouble. Why," he grinned, "at the end of their time they returned to the Cogmollocks with trunks loaded with white man's clothing, rifles, ammunition, and enough white man's culture to high-hat the rest of the tribe. Now they're big men amongst the Cogmollocks, and the Huskies seem to think all they've got to do if they want a good time at the white man's expense is to put a snow-knife or a bullet into someone. First thing

you know it won't be safe for any white man in Coronation Gulf. Someone'll pay the piper or I miss my guess."

Little did I think as I pulled my fur cap down over my ears and crawled beneath the folds of my eiderdown how poignantly I was going to recall Bill's words ere two years had elapsed.

CHAPTER XX
STONE AGE PATROL

WHEN the *Mackenzie River* pulled into Fort Norman the following July to the usual accompaniment of fluttering pennants and clanging signal bells the first man up the gang-plank was Bill Doak, his round face beaming with delight. Straight up the companion-way to my cabin he came, obviously the bearer of good tidings.

"Well, Bill," I laughed, delighted to welcome my genial trail-companion again, "what's on your mind? Never saw you look so tickled in my life."

"Hit it lucky," grinned the irrepressible Doak. "Going back among the Huskies. Leaving this God-forsaken hole for God's wide open spaces and hitting it back to the Arctic. Maybe I'll have a chance to clean up a few white foxes."

Bill was exuberant as I produced glasses and a bottle of Scotch. "Why, what's doing now?" I asked.

"Just another family mix-up somewhere east of Coronation Gulf," he replied as he downed his drink. "Same old story. Some Huskie got too handy with his knife, the rest piled in, and I've got to bring the whole caboodle back to Herschel Island."

Under the stimulating influence of a few congenial drinks he told of the orgy of slaughter that was sweeping the igloos of the bloodthirsty Cogmollocks in the vicinity of the new Police post at Tree River, and of how Corneilus and Brockie had been constantly on the go, running down one Tartar-faced killer after another.

First Hiktak had mysteriously disappeared while camping with his wife, Arkak, and his friend Komeuk near Port Epworth. Angry words had passed between them over Komeuk's amatory advances to the woman. Shortly afterwards Komeuk had gone out hunting, then Hiktak had picked up his Winchester and gone off in search of caribou. It was dark when Komeuk returned, carrying a load of meat upon his back. When Arkak awakened, her surprise at her husband's continued absence turned to alarm when she discovered one of his mittens beneath her pillow. A subsequent search of the ice-fields disclosed his rifle, cartridge

belt, and lots of caribou tracks and blood, but not a sign of Hiktak nor the caribou from which the meat was supposed to have been cut. By a strange coincidence the "meat" brought in by Komeuk had been devoured overnight by the sleigh dogs. Komeuk had taken the woman to his igloo and while the Police searched in vain for evidence to prove that he had murdered Hiktak the Cogmollocks smiled inscrutably—and held their tongues.

The trailing down of Ahtak, who had eluded Clay's search the year before, disclosed the fact that he had already become the victim of Cogmollock vengeance. It had been very simple, and quite in accord with Eskimo contempt for the value of human life.

Following a misunderstanding between Ahtak and his partner, Agluetuk, the two men were squatted outside their tupeks, repairing their harpoons. Suddenly Ahtak had seized a gun, shot Agluetuk and left him squirming in his death agonies on the ground. Having thus disposed of his fancied enemy he had accommodately invited Olepseak to share his wife and tupek. Overcome again with the bloodlust, he attempted to kill his wife and brother-in-law. Promptly he was seized and preparations made to transport him to the Happy Hunting Grounds. With Oriental fatalism he requested that they strangle him instead of knifing him, and while Olepseak pinned him to the ice the broad-hipped and far from pulchritudinous Ahkootuk slipped a rawhide noose around his neck and finished off the job.¹

When Corneilus and Brockie attempted to arrest the culprits they met with the determined resistance of a milling mob of hostile Cogmollocks. Amokok, the star witness, flatly refused to accompany them, and but for the timely intervention of Uluksuk, who was acting as interpreter, they would, in all probability, have left their bones to be picked by Arctic foxes.

But the case that was taking Doak to Coronation Gulf was of a still more sanguinary character and, like most of the others, had its inception in the Cogmollock habit of infanticide.

For untold ages it had been the custom of these natives to destroy unwanted female children at birth, especially during periods of adversity. No doubt this arose largely from the fact that life was difficult enough for the hunters without their having to provide for a population of surplus women who, from a tribal

¹ I met Ahkootuk at Herschel Island in 1923 where she was awaiting trial. She had been taught by one of the Mounties to do the Shimmy, and was enjoying herself hugely by entertaining all visitors with her latest accomplishment. She received a two years sentence.—P.H.G.

standpoint, were considered non-producers. To such an extent had this grisly practice been followed that there was a serious shortage of available young women as wives for the adolescent hunters. Thus, if a man desired a woman of his own he was forced to resort to caveman tactics and take one by force from some other hunter. And since the Cogmollock method of eliminating the superfluous husband was to watch one's chance and shoot, or stab, him in the back, murders, with their ensuing blood feuds, had become so appallingly frequent that Inspector Stuart T. Wood, in command at Herschel Island, decided it was time to take prompt and energetic action.¹

In this instance the trouble centred around a burly savage named Hanak whose chief object in life seemed to be to acquire a hyperborean harem. Having rounded up most of the local beauties he threatened Tatamagama and Pugnana with death when he discovered that they were leading some of the latest additions to his seraglio away from the straight and narrow path. Warned of their danger they decided to safeguard themselves by ridding the camp of Hanak at the first convenient opportunity.

Igloo gossip soon precipitated the crisis. Rushing furiously from his igloo Hanak discharged his rifle at the innocent Agnakvik. From behind another igloo Tatamagama's rifle spat fire and Hanak fell, clutching at a bullet hole above his heart. Simultaneously Pugnana's gun blazed at Ikpahahack as he rushed to the support of Hanak. With bullets ripping through the snow walls of the igloos, and the encampment a rabble of shouting, blood-mad men, screaming women and terror-stricken children, Pugnana pursued Hanak's fleeing wife, stabbed her to death, then sheathed the weapon in the body of her husband as he lay dying on the snow.

The gory battle over, Tatamagama looked with envious eyes upon the comely Kupak, the prize Pugnana had won.

Crouched over a seal-hole on the wind-swept ice near Kent Peninsula, Tatamagama confided his troubles to his eighteen-year-old nephew, Aligoomiak. At last he made up his mind. They would take Pugnana caribou hunting and in the excitement of the chase one of them would slip behind and shoot him in the back. When they returned Tatamagama would take over Pugnana's igloo, wife and personal possessions. Would Aligoomiak agree? If so he would give him one of those wonderful death-

¹ Appointed Commissioner R.C.M. Police March 11th, 1938, succeeding Major-General Sir James H. MacBrien.—P.H.G.

dealing rifles the traders had brought into the land of the Cogmollocks and sold for twenty white fox pelts. With such a tempting prize before him the lad agreed. Ere the blue-white domes of the igloos were sighted all arrangements had been completed.

A few days later Tatamagama, Aligoomiak and Pugnana departed from the village and struck towards the mainland in search of caribou. Topping a wind-swept ridge they ran into a herd of forty or fifty caribou who gazed at them in round-eyed amazement, then, with a flick of their tails, were off.

As Pugnana and Tatamagama discharged their rifles and rushed towards the ridge Aligoomiak fell behind and pulled the trigger. The whip-like crack of the rifle was followed by a strangled cry from Pugnana as he pitched forward and clawed the snow. For a moment his feet drummed the frozen drifts, then, with a convulsive movement, he lay still.

Leaving the body to be devoured by the wolves and foxes the conspirators returned to the village and reported the accidental shooting of their partner. Then, without resistance or delay, Tatamagama moved into Kupak's igloo.

There remained but one cloud upon Tatamagama's horizon. The presence of Pugnana's nine months old daughter whose cries disturbed his rest at night. Again Aligoomiak was approached. This time he was to receive four boxes of cartridges for his new rifle if he would rid his uncle's igloo of the child. The deal was soon completed, and ere many days had passed the child had followed her father's ghostly trail into the Unknown and her cries no longer disturbed the Eskimo's repose.

"Yes," laughed Doak, rising, "they're sure a playful bunch, those damn Cogmollocks."

"Not so playful!" interrupted D'Arcy Arden, appearing in the doorway in a loose-fitting, embroidered ahtegi of caribou skin, his tawny hair tousled with the wind. "If I don't miss my guess you'll be fed up with those Cogmollocks, Bill, before you're through with them. They're different to the Nunatagmuits."

Bill shrugged his shoulders good-naturedly and stepped out on deck, leaving D'Arcy and I together to talk over the affairs of his little post on Dease Bay.

As the siren emitted its warning fifteen-minute blast Doak appeared for a parting drink. "Well, good luck," I said, wringing his hand, then, voicing the Northerner's farewell to anyone leaving for the east, I added with a smile, "See the Cogmollocks don't eat your liver!"

Bill emitted a throaty chuckle and his last whimsical words were lost in the resonant blast of the siren and the bedlam of shouts from the dusky populace lining the foot of the bank as the paddle-wheel commenced slowly to revolve. A few minutes later we were out in the current and I watched Bill Doak waving his Stetson above his head until the figures merged into an indistinguishable blur of colour.

A week later, when the *Northland Trader* pulled in to the bank, Doak was waiting, dunnage bag in hand, his bed-roll at his feet. As the gang-plank was thrown ashore he made his way aboard, his moccasined feet leading him with unerring instinct to the purser's cabin where, glass in hand, he was soon discussing the up-river gossip and news of the Outside world with George Slater and other Northern notables.

Soon they chugged past the Arctic Circle and at last the mosquito-infested mud flats of Aklavic hove in sight, the willow-fringed banks lined with scores of two-masted motor schooners belonging to the Nunatagmuits of the Delta. Here Doak transferred his belongings aboard the schooner of an Eskimo who was willing to take him over to Herschel Island, and the following evening emerged from the willow-crested channels into the ice-filled waters of the Beaufort Sea, red and angry-looking in the smoky red light of the low-lying midnight sun.

At last the frozen headland of Herschel rose in silhouette against the skyline, then the familiar white buildings of the former Pacific Steam Whaling Company—now Mounted Police headquarters—took form, growing rapidly closer. An hour later he had reported to Inspector Stuart T. Wood and received his orders.

There was no time for delay. The trading vessels from Vancouver and San Francisco had come and gone some time before and were now thought to be safely around Point Barrow, having once again won their fight with the polar ice. Constable Woolams had been assigned to accompany Doak, and was ready to leave, so bidding a hasty farewell to the traders and Police on the island, Doak and Woolams boarded the Hudson's Bay Company's motor schooner, *Fort McPherson*, the lines were cast off and the sturdy little vessel, turning her iron-barked prow to the eastward, headed out to sea.

Through fog and ice and Arctic blizzard she buffeted her way. There was little accommodation, and for days and nights on end sleep was out of the question as the vessel fought her way through thunderous, ice-filled seas. Drenched often to the skin Police and

crew remained continually on duty, ready to lend a hand the moment any emergency should arise.

Calling in at Baillie Island she nosed her way into the ice-filled waters of Dolphin Union Straits, following one lead after another in what appeared at times to be a fruitless effort to buffet her way through the limitless pans of grinding ice.

At length the *Fort McPherson* entered a deep, rock-girt inlet, rounded a granite point and dropped anchor before a small hut and a couple of galvanized iron buildings that constituted the Hudson's Bay Company's new trading post of Tree River. On a rocky knoll a hundred yards to the northward arose the puny barracks of the Mounted Police erected by Sergeant Clay two years before.

Hardly had the *Fort McPherson* dropped anchor ere the shore became suddenly alive and a host of needle-shaped kyaks and canoes loaded with Tartar-faced Cogmollocks bore down upon the ship. Soon the deck was overrun with shaggy visitors, all in their best garments of fringed and embroidered skin. Only by the long tails of their skin ahtegis could the men be distinguished from the women, though occasionally a diminutive red face framed with short black hair and lighted with sloe-black eyes peeped over the top of the hood in which the mother carried the infant. The aboriginal invasion was followed by the few white exiles who made this lonely place their temporary home: Pete Norberg, swashbuckling explorer and trader; Otto Binder, Hudson's Bay factor, with his rosy-cheeked Cogmollock wife, and C. H. Clarke, youthful Inspector for the fur company, all news-hungry and anxious for word of what was going on beyond civilization's frontier.

Hardly had Doak and Woolams made themselves at home in their one-roomed barracks, and put up fish and seal for dog-feed, than without the slightest warning a blizzard burst upon them from the north-east with all the savage fury of the Arctic. Day after day the gale shrieked and howled around the little shack as though bent on demolishing it, while the snow drifted higher and higher until even the windows were obscured and darkness reigned within save for the murky yellow light of a smoky coal-oil lamp. For nine days the storm raged, confining the men within. Then, abruptly, it ceased, and after much digging the imprisoned inmates penetrated into the open and saw their world completely enveloped in a blanket of hard-drifted snow.

Soon the sun dipped to its winter's rest and daylight dwindled

until artificial light became necessary all the time. Then snow-blocks were cut and a wall built around the shack as an added protection from the Arctic cold.

Ere long Cogmollocks commenced to drive their fan-shaped teams of small, sharp-eared huskies into the post to trade their white fox pelts for rifles, cartridges, knives and copper kettles. From these dusky visitors Doak learned the whereabouts of Aligoomiak and Tatamagama and preparations were pushed ahead for the final march into the sealing camps of the Cogmollocks.

CHAPTER XXI

INTO THE COGMOLLOCK SEALING GROUNDS

ON the raw morning of December 3rd, with the stars twinkling coldly through the violet half-light, Corporal Doak hitched his huskies to the ice-shod komatik laden with frozen seal meat, provisions, bedding, rifles and equipment, and with Woolams as escort, and a young Eskimo named Silas as interpreter, plunged into the darkened void that lay ahead.

Through the semi-twilight of Arctic night they journeyed onward, rising early, and camping at night in a hastily improvised snowhouse where they prepared their food on a hissing Primus stove. For the first three days they were lucky. The weather continued good with neither wind nor snow to cause enforced delay.

The fourth day the dogs were working well, and Doak was looking forward to an uneventful trip. Silas was ahead, picking out a trail through the up-ended hummocks of greenish ice and rocky islands drifted deep in salty snow. Suddenly he stopped, and as the dog-teams approached appeared to be engaged in feverish activity. When they reached the spot they found him cutting snow-blocks with his fourteen inch snow-knife. Already the first circle of blocks which go towards the making of an igloo had been laid.

"Too soon to make camp yet, Silas," yelled the Corporal.

"Make'um camp plenty quick," replied the native, not ceasing his efforts for a moment. "Plenty soon him come big wind."

Hurriedly the policemen unhitched the dogs, threw bedding and grub into the partly-erected igloo and lashed the remaining baggage tightly on the sled so that it could not be blown away. Hardly had the snowhouse been completed ere the blizzard broke upon them with all its fierce impetuosity. But already they were safely ensconced within, the door sealed with blocks of snow. For days the storm raged with relentless fury, none of the inmates daring to venture without lest they be caught in the grip of the fierce wind and whipped away to die. As suddenly as it had arisen the gale abated and they prepared to hit the trail once more.

There followed days of arduous travel. Then, like a purple shadow, the distant shoreline of Kent Peninsula loomed in sight and with it signs of native occupation. Rounding an ice-girt spit of land they saw, outstretched before them, the empurpled domes of a large Cogmollock village, the orange light of the blubber lamps flickering here and there through windows of glazed sea-ice. There was no time to prepare for the meeting. Scenting the camp, the dogs gave tongue in short, excited yelps, and with the komatik swaying drunkenly from side to side they were swept swiftly into the centre of the camp.

Long ere they reached the village skin-clad figures emerged on hands and knees from the depths of the snowhouses and a hundred pairs of dark, mysterious eyes gazed questioningly at these strange *Kablunats*. The frigid air seemed filled with menace. The ready welcome which the ever-hospitable Eskimos extended to strangers was conspicuously lacking. No dusky hand assisted in throwing the harness off the dogs, or in unlashng the sled. No greeting was extended, nor invitation issued to enter any igloo. Instead the natives stood about, aggressive and suspicious. From the motley horde of Mongol-faced humanity emerged a wrinkled old savage, evidently the patriarch of the band. All eyes were turned upon him.

"What do the *Kablunats* desire in Oolibuk's village?" demanded the *angatkuk* with an unfriendly look. Haltingly Silas interpreted the words.

"Do you not know," demanded Doak, "who we are?"

"The Rich Men of the Country," replied the savage, who evidently had not the slightest conception of who, or what, the Police were or what their functions were supposed to be.

"Tell him," Doak turned to Silas, "that we come from the Great White *Angatkuk* across the sea with presents for Oolibuk, whose name as a mighty hunter and a righteous man has spread even to the stone igloos of the *Kablunats*."

The seriousness and hazards of the situation weren't lost upon the Corporal. Although armed, the Police would be entirely at the mercy of the horde of savages should they turn hostile. A single false move was all that was necessary to encompass their instant destruction, for human life meant nothing to the Cogmollocks, as had already been exemplified in the wholesale murders that had occurred. Tact and diplomacy alone would ensure the success of the undertaking and bring about the arrest and removal of Aligoomiak and Tatamagama.

The mention of presents had its effect, for Oolibuk's attitude softened as he issued guttural orders for the dogs to be fed with frozen seal meat and the belongings of the *Kablunats* to be carried into his igloo. A broad-faced, malevolent-looking Eskimo with a leering eye and a small goatee signed to them to enter a snow-tunnel.

Crawling on hands and knees they emerged from the dank interior into a brightly-lighted snowhouse considerably larger than the average which was connected with neighbouring igloos by a network of other tunnels. Within fur-clad women and children reclined on caribou skins spread on a snow-shelf two feet high which covered half the floor space, the children playing with the inevitable puppies, while the light from two stone blubber lamps cast a smoky red radiance about the rancid-smelling interior. Glancing around Doak observed that some of the men had discarded their upper clothing and squatted around stripped to the waist.

Opening his bundle he disclosed to the crafty eyes of Oolibuk the presents he had brought, watching narrowly the medicine man's reactions, and was relieved to see him lean eagerly forward and hear his childish ejaculations of pleased surprise.

"All this the Great *Angatkuk* sent you, Oolibuk, because he knows you to be an honest man—a man who will not countenance evil doings," continued Doak, "therefore he desires your help in bringing justice upon the murderers of Hanak and Pugnana." As Silas interpreted he waited.

For a long time the *angatkuk* remained silent, his cupidity battling with his native shrewdness until the suspense became almost intolerable. At last he addressed the interpreter.

"This man you call your Great *Angatkuk* must be wise indeed to deal thus generously with Oolibuk," he croaked. "Last night I projected my dream personality afar over the snows. I saw you, and knew that you would be here to-day. The men you want are in an igloo near by. I will send my son with you that you may find them easily and they shall go peaceably with you."

Striking while the iron was hot Doak arose, pulled his wol-verine-trimmed hood over his head, thrust his hands into his polar bear-skin mittens and signified his intention of proceeding forthwith in search of Tatamagama. Led by Oolibuk's swarthy son he reached the igloo indicated and, followed by Woolams and Silas, crawled inside.

Aligoomiak, a slim, sloe-eyed youth of about eighteen, was

engaged in devouring a dish of *ookchuk* and paid scant attention to the newcomers save for a fleeting smile. But Tatamagama, a thick-set, swarthy ruffian, seemed nervous and avoided the policeman's eye.

Shaking hands, Doak squatted upon a bed of deerskins and made known his errand. Evidently their coming had been anticipated and, with the Oriental fatalism of the Eskimo, not the slightest attempt was made either to escape or evade capture. In a few seconds the arrest of Aligoomiak and Tatamagama had become an accomplished fact.

Hitching up their dog-teams they departed a few hours later for Tree River. As the dim, inhospitable shoreline of Kent Peninsula sank slowly out of sight Doak turned to Woolams. "Thank God that's over!" he remarked and cracked his whip.

Aligoomiak had frozen his heels and was unfit for travel.

With his usual consideration the kind-hearted Doak made for a camp in the neighbourhood and rested six days, treating the lad until he was fit to carry on.

Homeward-bound, Doak heard from the prisoners of still another killing at Grace Bay. Swinging off his course he made his way to another sealing camp and unearthed the story of how Ikalukpiak had killed his friend Havogak in order to obtain his wife, Khatia. "I had little to go on," Doak reported later, "but the friends of the murdered man were very much worked up so I knew if I didn't pick him up they would deal with him in their own way, which would be a dead-end for him."

So Doak casually picked him up, added him to the procession of skin-clad prisoners, and on New Year's Day mushed once more up to the lonely barracks at Tree River.

Throughout the trip the prisoners had given not the slightest trouble, while Aligoomiak had proven particularly willing, and Doak, always fond of Eskimos, had conceived quite a warm liking for the lad. What to do with the prisoners now became a problem. There was no cell to lock them in, while to keep them shackled was entirely out of the question. It was finally decided to allow them a certain amount of liberty and make them assist in the routine work of catching and hauling in seal for dog-feed, mending dog-harness and doing other daily chores.

Aligoomiak soon seemed quite at home and, always quick and willing, went about his work with a smile. Finally Doak appointed him a sort of personal servant. Already the lad had picked up quite a few English words and phrases, and each night

slept in his fur shingabee on the floor of the barracks while Doak occupied the corner bunk.

As dog-feed had become scarce Ikalukpiak and Tatamagama had been sent with Woolams and Silas to the Eskimo seal-camp, eight miles to the westward, where they remained with Clarke, the Hudson's Bay Inspector, putting up a supply of seal meat for the spring.

The only whites now remaining at Tree River were Otto Binder at his post a hundred yards across the frozen bay, and Corporal Doak himself. To overcome the daily monotony of existence Binder would drop in on Doak each evening for a game of poker, and finally formed the habit of also visiting him each morning after breakfast.

As March drew towards its close, and the sun rose a little higher every day, it became necessary to discard winter mukluks for waterproof Eskimo boots of sealskin which had to be chewed each morning to soften them, a duty assigned by the natives to their cinnamon-cheeked spouses, but which, in this instance, the Corporal had allotted to Aligoomiak.

On the morning of April 1st Doak rolled out of his bunk, rubbed his eyes and called for his mukluks. The Cogmollock grinned and tossed them over. Impatiently Doak threw them back. "Here—chew these damn things properly," he ordered. "They're hard as a board!"

With ill grace the native did as he was told, tossed them back, then picked up the slop-pail and started to go outside. But it was the Eskimo's off-morning. Without warning the handle gave way, spilling the contents with a splash upon the floor.

"Damn it," growled Doak, leaping to his feet, "what's wrong with you this morning? Get to blazes out of here!" Picking up the mop he proceeded to clean up the mess.

That night when Binder dropped in for his usual game of poker he noticed that the prisoner was sulky.

"What's wrong with the lad here?" he remarked at length. "Seems kind of ornery, don't he?"

Doak grinned. "Him! Oh, he's all right. Just gave him a bawling out this morning and he's feeling kind of sore. He's a damned good kid, though. He'll get over it."

At midnight Binder arose, bid Doak good night and stepped out into the darkness. Doak stretched his arms, glanced at the recumbent Eskimo, yawned, then rolled himself in his eiderdown, blew out the coal-oil lamp and promptly fell asleep.

The Cogmollock, however, did not sleep. Instead he watched Doak's corner with black beady eyes, eyes that smouldered with rebellion. Towards dawn, as he listened to the soft, even breathing of the policeman he crawled furtively from his sleeping-bag, stole softly past the sleeping Mountie and slipped outside. Breaking quietly into the lean-to he emerged with a rifle and four cartridges which he slipped into the magazine. For a second he stood, listening at the door. Then slinking noiselessly back into the barracks he stood beside the stove in the centre of the room regarding the sleeping Doak with an inscrutable smile. Slowly the Eskimo's rifle rose. His lean finger tightened on the trigger. A thunderous roar rocked the building accompanied by a scream of agony from the prostrate Doak.

"What did you do that for?" he demanded in a stricken voice as his life-blood slowly ebbed away. . . . "What did you do that for?"

For four hours, like a graven image, the Eskimo sat there watching the man who had befriended him die slowly. Then hugging the rifle he took his place beside the window.

Impassively he waited. As the red rim of the sun peeped above the frozen sea, converting the violet reaches into a blood-red hue, the door of the trading post opened. Across the ice strode Otto Binder to pay his usual morning call. There was a tinkle of glass as the Eskimo pushed the muzzle of his rifle through the window. Unsuspecting, Binder strode steadily on. He had reached a point mid-way between the barracks and the post when, from the unseen rifle, belched a spear of flame. With a convulsive leap Otto crumpled and lay still upon the snow.

Calmly the Eskimo made his way across the ice and entered Binder's dwelling. Unaware of the tragedy which had been enacted his pretty Eskimo wife was busying herself about the stove. "Come," exclaimed the Cogmollock, "I want show you somet'ing." Leading the way he pointed to the dead body of her husband outstretched upon the snow. "I kill'um," he informed her laconically. "Kill'um p'liceman. Go seal-camp kill'um all white mans." Turning on his heel he swung with long, even strides towards the Eskimo village.

Out at the seal-camp that morning Clarke and Woolams had decided to go farther afield in search of seal. Their search was well rewarded. In the springtime these mammals are in the habit of emerging from their holes in the ice and disporting themselves in the snow, and a dozen or more had fallen to their rifles when

Woolams' attention was attracted by a fast-moving object approaching from the direction of the igloos. Soon it resolved itself into a dog-team being driven frantically across the ice. Time and again the wicked five-fathom lash would rise and fall with a report like a rifle-shot, accompanied by the terrific howling of the huskies.

"Hey, Clarke—look!" Woolams narrowly watched the approaching sled. "Must be something wrong." No native, under normal conditions, he realized, would maltreat his dogs in this way. With anxious faces and hearts filled with foreboding they waited.

As the Eskimo drew closer it was obvious that he laboured under great excitement. Yanking his dogs to a sudden halt he addressed Silas in a torrent of guttural Eskimo. Silas listened in open-mouthed astonishment, then, recovering the use of his faculties, turned a livid face to the policeman.

"Aligoomiak—him kill'um Doak. Kill'um Binder," he panted. "Come seal-camp wid gun for kill'um all white mans!" he announced. "Come for kill you!" he looked at Woolams. "And you, too!" he turned a dismayed face to Clarke.

Pale and speechless, incapable of realizing the full significance of the Eskimo's words, the two whites questioned the excited native, eliciting the information that some time after they had left that morning Aligoomiak had arrived at the seal-camp, rifle in hand, and strangely excited, with the intention of shooting them both and returning to Oolibuk's village at Kent Peninsula. Only the fact that they had gone farther afield that day had probably saved them from being surprised and murdered in cold blood. Not finding his expected victims he had entered Tapuk's igloo, boasting of having killed the two white men, and the old man had secretly despatched his son to warn the remaining whites.

Ordering the others to follow at a more leisurely pace lest the sight of the Police team alarm the prisoner, Woolams set out immediately with Tapuk's son for the seal-camp. From his hiding place beneath a cover of deerskins he watched the igloos take form and grow gradually closer. Shocked at first by the terrifying news his mind speedily became clearer. The whole thing was absurd. Nobody knew the Huskies better than Bill Doak. No! It wasn't feasible that the lad could have killed him. Aligoomiak must have given him the slip and now, Eskimo-like, was talking big to impress the natives. The Huskies had got this thing all wrong.

Relieved by this mental summing up Woolams saw old Tapuk's igloo loom up ahead. Casting aside the deerskin covering and pulling down his hood to disguise his face, he plunged inside.

Within Aligoomiak was eating leisurely, boasting to an audience of greasy, skin-clad Cogmollocks that killing a white man was as simple as shooting a white partridge. Suddenly he became rigid as his eyes encountered those of Constable Woolams. For a split second white man and savage surveyed each other. Then Woolams leapt. Catching the Cogmollock by the throat he threw him down, lashed his wrists behind him and hauled him out on to the ice.

Already Silas and Clarke had driven up. Throwing the Eskimo roughly upon his sled Woolams cracked his whip and called to his lead-dog. At that moment Tapuk stepped forward, spoke hurriedly and nodded significantly toward the prisoner.

"What does he say?" snapped Woolams.

"Him say," interpreted Silas, "mebbe better kill'um right now so he no make it more trubble," and nodded towards the axe in the old chief's hand as though endorsing the suggestion. And it was with disgust and wonder at the strange ways of the *Kablunats* that the Cogmollocks saw Aligoomiak borne away from the village alive.

The eight mile stretch of broken, up-ended ice to Tree River seemed interminable. As the Hudson's Bay post hove in sight their worst fears began to be realized. Not a sign of life could be seen. Not a wisp of smoke curled from the stove-pipes of trading post or barracks. Over the entire bay hung a significant brooding stillness pregnant with unspoken things.

Pulling up before the post the policeman entered. Not a soul was to be seen. On the table lay the soiled breakfast dishes and on the cold stove a pot half-filled with frozen porridge. There came the quick pad, pad of Silas' mukluks. "Come quick," he breathed. "See'm somet'ing on de snow. Dogs—dey plenty scare! "

Following the direction in which Silas pointed they observed an object that resembled a fallen caribou mid-way between the barracks and the post. They hurried over.

Lying on his face, his fur-clad arms outstretched, was Otto Binder, the factor, shot clean through the heart.

Leaving the dead man they hurried over to the Police shack. Fearfully Woolams swung open the door, stepped within and

glanced around. All seemed at first to be in order, then, as his eyes swung towards the bed, he blanched and started back. There, on the bunk, lay the inert form of Bill Doak, his sightless eyes staring at the ceiling, his features frozen in a look of utter agony. Bill Doak, the friend of every Eskimo, riverman, red-skin and roughneck from Athabasca Landing to the Polar Sea, had reached the end of the trail—struck down by the bullet of a treacherous Cogmollock he had befriended!

His eyes misty with unshed tears Woolams made a perfunctory examination. A bullet had struck Doak in the thigh and been deflected into the body. Evidently it must have paralysed him, for his loaded revolver hung within arm's reach untouched. Near the stove lay an empty 30.30 shell, and beneath the broken window lay another. The door of the little lean-to creaked ajar on its frozen hinges, and one of the 30.30 rifles which had been taken from the prisoners and stored within was missing.

CHAPTER XXII
THE LAW GOES NORTH

FOUR and a half months later the lonely outpost of Herschel Island was thrown into a tumult of excitement by the announcement that the *Fort McPherson* was approaching. As she rounded the headland and chugged into the cove a strange feeling of foreboding seemed to grip the onlookers. There was something peculiar about the attitude of those on board. The answering cries of welcome were half-hearted. Then suddenly the question went around. Where was Doak? Had anybody seen him? It was not like the Corporal to be backward in shouting a welcome to his friends!

As the gang-plank was thrown ashore the serious faces of all on board showed that something was amiss, then, like wild-fire, the story spread. Doak was dead! Killed by the Cogmollocks! A hushed and horrified silence pervaded the little group of men as they pressed forward, hoping against hope that the news would not prove true. Woolams, with set face, stepped ashore, shook hands with Inspector Wood and slowly accompanied him towards the barracks.

By this time Captain Jacobson and the crew were intermingling with the crowd and the story of Doak's killing became known to one and all. A deep gloom descended upon the Arctic outpost. Soon the story reached the mainland. Within a month it had found its way along the two thousand mile reaches of the Mackenzie and the Athabasca until, even in the smoke-stained tepees of the Yellow Knives and Dog-Ribs in the Land of Little Sticks, the killing of the "Smiling Mountie" by those savage "Eaters of Raw Flesh" was discussed with awe and sorrow.

Never will I forget the feeling I experienced when I boarded the *Distributor* at Fort Providence that summer and learned for the first time of the brutal murder of my genial trail-companion and friend of many years. I had seen him depart but one short year before, filled with enthusiasm at the prospect of being once more amongst his friends, the Eskimos, and I could still see that cheerful grin on his sun-tanned face at my facetious warning not to let the Cogmollocks eat his liver. Now he was dead, a victim of

Cogmollock bullets. Again there flashed through my mind that casual remark of his beside the camp-fire near the Arctic Circle: "Someone'll pay the piper, Godsell, or I miss my guess."

Meanwhile the ponderous machinery of the white man's law swung slowly into action. Housed in the Guard Room at Herschel Island Tatamagama and Aligoomiak were permitted daily exercise. But, as time went on, their liberty was increased until Tatamagama became the official seal-hunter for the Police and Aligoomiak, spick and span in white ducks and canvas shoes, pantry-boy and laundryman for the wife of the Inspector. Within six months both might, to all appearances, have been paid employees of the Force. Around the island they wandered at will, retiring to their cells when they felt so disposed.

In the middle of June, 1923, all was bustle and excitement at the little red-painted station of Dunvegan Yards near Edmonton. The Muskeg Limited was ready to depart for the end-of-steel at Waterways to connect with the river steamers leaving for the Arctic. The platform was thronged with Indians, squaws, grizzled trappers in mackinaws and fringed buckskin, and traders returning North after a riotous visit to the white lights; Mounted Policemen in scarlet serges; black-robed nuns and priests; Government officials, and representatives of the fur companies.

But added interest was given this year by the judicial party leaving on their four thousand mile return journey to carry the white man's law to Herschel Island in the Land of the Midnight Sun. There was tall, grey-haired, distinguished-looking Judge Dubuc; there were lawyers for the Prosecution and the Defence; the Clerk of the Court; a Mounted Police escort under Sergeant F. E. Spriggs and—most significant of all—Mr. Brown, *the hangman!*

As the engine's final whistle echoed amongst the cottonwoods all piled aboard and soon the little train was lurching and rocking from side to side across the muskeg. Reaching the end-of-steel next day the party transferred to the stern-wheeled *Athabasca River* and, ere night had fallen, were headed northward down the heavily-wooded reaches of the beautiful Athabasca River.

Arriving at Fort Fitzgerald they left the steamer and crossed the eighteen mile portage to Fort Smith on slow-moving cayuse-hauled carts and boarded the *Distributor* only to learn that owing to the presence of heavy ice on Great Slave Lake it would be impossible to get away before the end of June.

With the entire settlement of Fort Smith down to bid them

God-speed, and the red flag of the fur company fluttering out its salutation, the steamer pulled out from the sandy banks on the evening of July 1st and headed for the Arctic. Next day they reached Fort Resolution and the judicial party gazed with interest on the old Hudson's Bay fort surrounded with the skin tepees of the dusky tribesmen from the land of the caribou and the musk-ox who had just arrived on their annual trading expedition. With equal interest the redskins surveyed the imposing retinue of Judges, lawyers, and their scarlet-coated escort, exulting at the thought that the wrath of the whites was going to descend upon the heads of the hated "Eaters of Raw Flesh".

In a little over a week's time the party stood on the muddy banks of Aklavic,¹ and, a few days later, I arranged for them to be conveyed to their destination aboard the Hudson's Bay "mud-scow"; a peculiar craft with pilot house of beaver board, totally unsuited to work in the Arctic, which, on orders from headquarters, had been transferred to the Delta from up-river.

Arriving at Herschel much the worse for their passage one of the large buildings of the Mounted Police was turned over to them for a court-room and the work of empanelling a jury was commenced.

Rarely had so many difficulties to be contended with. Every trapper, trader and beachcomber had known Doak and Binder intimately, and all had heard from the participants the full details of the crime. All looked with horror on the murders, though close contact and daily intercourse with the prisoners had dulled the edge of their feelings and developed, in some cases, an attitude of tolerant sympathy towards them.

After scouring the mainland and the Delta a jury was at last selected and preparations completed for the trial. Smilingly, Aligoomiak entered the dock. Looking round he observed that one of the jurors lacked a seat. Without a word he slipped quietly from the dock, disappeared through the doorway and returned a few minutes later with a chair, which he handed to the astonished juror with an ingratiating smile. Then, having per-

¹ In the summer of 1923 Inspector Stuart T. Wood decided to transfer Mounted Police headquarters from Herschel Island to Aklavic. At the same time, as Inspecting Officer for the Hudson's Bay Company, I decided to make Aklavic headquarters for the Western Arctic District. The advantages were numerous; contact with the outside world was much more frequent; wood was available for fuel, and timber for both building purposes and protection. As a consequence of these changes Aklavic became forthwith the metropolis of that region.

formed this unexpected service, he stepped back into the dock and surveyed his accusers with bland interest and curiosity.

Slowly the trial dragged on—the evidence against the natives accumulating.

Cross-examined, Aligoomiak suddenly pointed to one of the jurors, C. H. Clarke, and casually remarked that he had set out from Tree River with the intention of killing him. For a split second Clarke's face was a study, then a burst of laughter swept the court. A frown creased Judge Dubuc's brow. How, under the circumstances, could Clarke be expected to remain an unprejudiced juror? There was only one thing to be done—dismiss the court, re-empanel a jury and start the trial all over again.

Questioned at the new trial regarding the killing of Doak, Aligoomiak became the essence of frankness. Doak had spoken sharply to him that fatal April day, and he was mad. That the policeman ultimately meant to kill him, and, Eskimo-like, was merely waiting time and place, he felt assured. Sooner or later, he concluded, Doak would shoot or knife him in the back. For that reason he had never turned his back on his captor if he could possibly avoid it. That night, as he lay awake, he decided to bring matters to a head. He would shoot Doak in the leg and hurt him. He wanted him to suffer for his angry words. He did not wish to kill the policeman, but merely to wound him and force him into action. When he found how easy it was to kill a white man he decided to kill Binder, too. Then, with liberty in sight, he decided to clean up on the remaining two whites in Coronation Gulf and return to the village of his people.

The evidence against both Aligoomiak and Tatamagama was overwhelming. Furthermore, Radford and Street had been killed by these Cogmollocks only a few years before. Then Fathers Rouvier and LeRoux had fallen victims to their murderous bullets and copper snow-knives. Now a representative of the Force and a trader had both been murdered in cold blood. If drastic action was not taken it would be unsafe for white men to venture into Coronation Gulf.

Nervously Judge Dubuc arose and passed the death sentence, setting the date for the execution at December 7th. With a grin Aligoomiak stepped from the dock, pulled from his pocket a package of cigarettes given him by a juror and as he passed the Judge casually handed a smoke to the man who had just decreed his death!

Their task completed, the judicial party set out for Aklavic to

catch the last steamer back to civilization, leaving hangman Brown behind. For some time thereafter "Neck-tie Bill", as the Eskimos called him, was busily engaged erecting a scaffold in the Bone House,¹ often watched interestedly by Aligoomiak, who, fortunately for his peace of mind, did not appear to have the faintest idea as to the function it was to be called on to perform.

On the contrary, he appeared to have taken quite a liking to "Neck-tie Bill", and, if current rumour had any foundation, was in the habit of indulging in a quiet game of poker with him on the platform of the scaffold.

While the trial was still in progress I departed aboard the Hudson's Bay Company's supply ship, *Lady Kindersley*, for the scene of the Doak murder to establish a number of new trading posts for the Company in the country of the Cogmollocks to curb the growing activities of Captain Klengenberg, who was fast proving a thorn in the Company's flesh.

It was late in August when the rugged coast-line of Coronation Gulf came into view, and we dropped anchor off the mouth of Tree River. An atmosphere of tragedy still lurked about the lonely spot where, two years before, a Cogmollock's bullets had snuffed out the lives of Doak and Binder. High up on the moss-covered hill behind the little trading post a crude cross marked the resting-place of the gallant and kindly policeman whose one mistake had been his misplaced trust in others. As I stood there beside that lonely grave on the edge of the silent tundra, and my mind raced back over the trails we'd travelled together, the riotous fun in which we'd engaged in youthful days at Norway House, and of the scrapes we'd often got into, I'm not ashamed to say that my eyes stung with unshed tears and I was glad I was alone.

While the ship was unloading I made preparations to despatch an expedition eastward to King William's Land to establish another trading post there and scout around for unknown Eskimos said to inhabit both Boothia and Adelaide Peninsulas, and the mouth of the Back's River.

Pete Norberg, whom I'd engaged for the somewhat dangerous venture, had brought along with him from Herschel a nondescript scow, which he aptly called *The Hobo*, in which a small motor engine was installed. The only other vessel available was

¹ A large warehouse which had previously belonged to the Pacific Steam Whaling Company and in which the whalebone or head-bone had been stored in days gone by, hence the name.—P.H.G.

the twenty ton *El Sueno* which had once been the plaything of some Californian millionaire. She was soon loaded with ten tons of coal, and ten tons of trading supplies, chiefly rifles, ammunition, axes, knives and copper kettles, along with an old sail and some odds and ends of lumber with which to erect winter quarters. A good sled and a team of sharp-eared huskies completed the cargo.

Just as the sun dipped behind the violet-shadowed cliffs Pete Norberg and Otto Torrington shook hands and stepped aboard *The Hobo*. The motor spluttered. *The Hobo* moved sluggishly ahead, taking the *El Sueno* in tow, and soon the two-man exploratory party had been swallowed up in the violet mists that overhung the floe-ice.

Not till a year later did I hear from Pete, then, in Winnipeg, I received a crumpled letter telling me that he had discovered four hundred previously unknown Eskimos and done a thriving trade with them at his sailcloth-walled post on King William's Land, graveyard of the ill-fated Franklin Expedition. He reported having met Knud Rasmussen that winter on his way by dog-team across the North-West Passage.

From Coronation Gulf we fought our way through heavy floe-ice around Wollaston Peninsula into Prince Albert Sound, north of Klengenbergs famous stronghold, and here, almost in the centre of Victoria Land, where it would intercept the Cogmollocks on their way south to trade with the Captain, I established Fort Brabant¹ and we headed back once more to Herschel Island.

A month later I had made myself comfortable in a small room at the Company's post there, intending to remain till freeze-up made it possible to continue my travels by dog-team through the Delta. The *Lady Kindersley* had scurried hurriedly away as Captain Foellmer was anxious to get round Point Barrow before the ice closed in.

My companions consisted of Herbert Hall, the factor, a genial giant who slouched around in mukluks and ahtegi and spent most of his time with the Eskimos hunting seal; Carroll, the post-manager who had previously traded at Dease Bay, with his petite and pretty Slavey wife, and a young Scotch clerk named Scotty Gall. Now and then we received a visit from Corporal

¹ This post was later moved to Walker Bay, opposite Bank's Island, and the name changed to "Fort Collinson".—P.H.G.

Other posts arranged for during this trip were Cambridge Bay and Perry River.

Pennyfather and his young bride, and occasionally I enjoyed the hospitality of Inspector Wood and his charming wife.

Soon the fury of the Arctic burst on us in earnest. The days became shorter and shorter until the sun, giving up the fight in despair, sank slowly to its winter lair and the Arctic twilight overspread the land.

Aligoomiak and Tatamagama wandered freely around, sometimes armed with rifles in search of seal. Frequently Aligoomiak would drop in and pay us a visit, displaying not the slightest concern over his rapidly-approaching trip to Eternity. On the contrary, he daily visited his sweetheart, Kunnelli, the hybrid product of a Negro father and an Eskimo mother, who was engaged in making him a new hunting suit of caribou skin!

Late that fall I was gazing through the small windows of the post as a howling blizzard drove clouds of blinding snow across the narrow sandspit when I observed a shadowy vessel ploughing her way through the white combers towards the harbour. Through the curtain of seething whiteness there emerged at last a small, two-masted schooner which beat her way into the cove and pulled up before the barracks. It was Klengenberg and his two sons, Andrew and Jorgen, who had sailed their forty-foot schooner, laden with nearly four thousand white fox pelts, across the Beaufort Sea from their rendezvous on Victoria Land despite the lateness of the season.

With the nearest market at Seattle, separated by five thousand miles of snow-covered mountain, wilderness and ocean, I decided to make him an offer for his furs. But Klengenberg merely smiled when Hall and I offered him a Hudson's Bay draft for one hundred thousand dollars, returned to his shack and proceeded to repair his sleds and harness.

A few days later, as soon as the bay was frozen, he set out with his sons and a couple of dog-teams to cross the snow-covered Rockies to Fairbanks in the heart of Alaska, intending to proceed on to the nearest port at Seward and take steamer for Seattle. With him he carried just a few sample foxes, provisions and equipment, and a letter from the Mounted Police certifying to the number and quality of the rest of the skins he had left with them for safe-keeping.

Two months later I trailed the Captain across the mountains with Louchoux guides, on through Alaska to Seward and south to the busy city of Seattle. There I learned that he had sold his furs for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars as the market had

improved. He had also purchased a two-masted, hundred ton schooner, the *Maid of Orleans*, and a large trading outfit; and had placed his boys in an engineering school to learn how to handle Diesel engines. The Captain was now all set to fulfil his life's ambition and conduct a staggering assault against his rivals to wrest back the trade of the Cogmollocks.

Meanwhile word had been flashed from the wireless station at Fort Yukon that Aligoomiak and Tatamagama had paid the penalty for their crimes. On the cold still morning of February 1st, 1924, while the Northern Lights wove fantastic patterns in the starlit dome above, the two Cogmollocks had gone boldly to their doom in the Bone House at Herschel Island. Aligoomiak alone had voiced a protest and remarked that he'd "always known the Mounted Police disliked the Eskimos".

When Captain Klengenberg arrived at Herschel Island the following summer and pulled up before the Mounted Police barracks to pay the usual customs dues ere proceeding east his ship and cargo were immediately impounded.

"What the hell's the big idea?" roared the irate Dane. "You can't hold me. Everything's legal and regular, ain't it? I ain't got no contraband aboard."

Inspector Wood surveyed him coldly. "American traders are no longer permitted to operate in the Western Arctic," he informed him. "The Beaufort Sea's been declared an inland sea. Sorry, if you want to go east you'll have to incorporate as a Canadian company. Till then you can't leave here!"

"*Inland sea!* Organize a Canadian company! The hell I will," stormed Klengenberg, almost beside himself with anger. "How'm I gonna do anything inside a year with no wireless here—and only one mail in the winter? I'd have to sail right back to Vancouver and wouldn't get back till next year. That means losing a year's trade. Not only that—my family's waiting for me at Rymer Point to bring 'em their winter's grub-stake. They'll starve if I don't get in there with these supplies."

In vain he pleaded, swore and stormed. The Police were adamant.

At last his persuasive tongue won him one concession. He would be allowed to sail east to his post at Rymer Point, but young, red-headed Constable MacDonald would go aboard and remain in charge. Under the surveillance of this young officer, who had just come to the Arctic the year before, he would unload

only those supplies necessary to keep his family from want, a list of which would be made out at Herschel Island before he left and be O.K.'d by the Police. Having discharged these supplies, *and these supplies only*, he would report back to Herschel Island with both ship and cargo. Next day the Captain sailed.

It was late in the fall when the *Maid of Orleans* rounded the sandspit and tied up again before the barracks. Friend recognized friend and waved. Suddenly the Police turned questioning glances at each other. Where was "Red" MacDonald?

Again, as on that fateful occasion three decades before, Klengenberg strode past cold-eyed men towards the barracks. Again he told a story of disaster. Constable "Red" MacDonald was dead. Drowned! He'd fallen overboard the very day the goods were discharged at the stronghold on Victoria Land.

Once more the island buzzed with angry speculation. Once more the Klengenberg ship had proven a death-trap. Again there was talk of trouble aboard; of disagreements and bitter arguments as to the quantity of supplies that should go ashore.

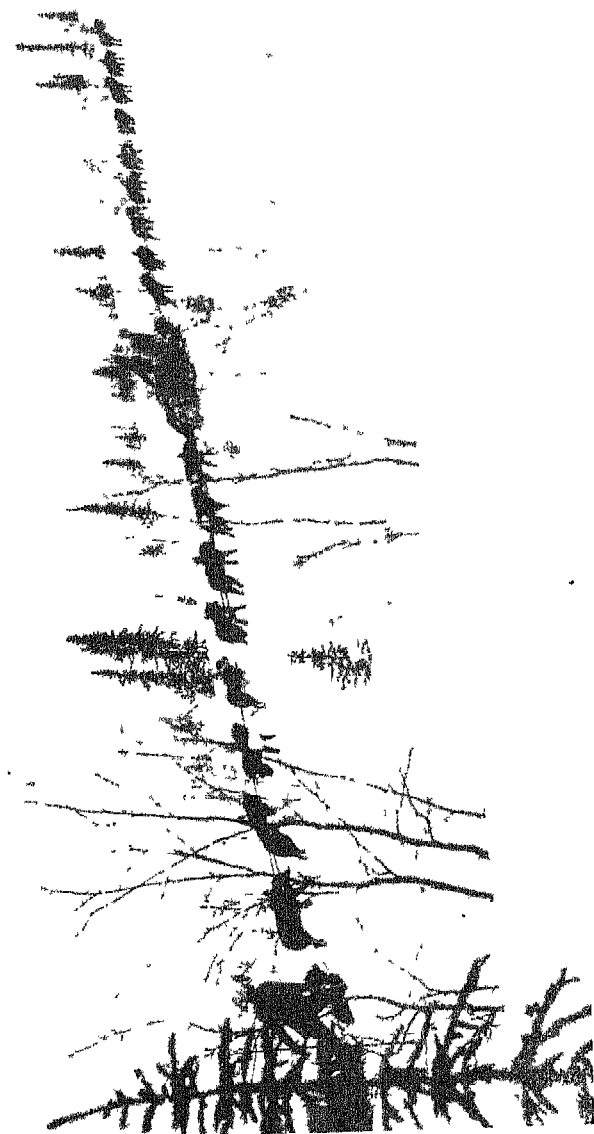
By special patrol word was sent seven hundred miles across the Rockies to the nearest wireless station at Fort Yukon and particulars of Constable MacDonald's untimely death relayed to Ottawa. The authorities were furious. Again the buccaneering Klengenberg's past was delved deeply into by the Police. Surviving Eskimo witnesses of the *Olga* debacle were re-examined. But despite black looks and dark suspicions Klengenberg maintained his rigid stand. Not a single witness could be found who had seen what happened. It was just an "unhappy accident". Constable MacDonald had simply fallen overboard!

Slogging once more across the Arctic Rockies the Dane made his way to Ottawa only to be met with frigid looks and flinty faces. Not till then did Klengenberg learn that young "Red" MacDonald was the grandson of Sir John A. MacDonald, the famed and honoured Father of Confederation.

Registering as a Canadian company he returned to Herschel Island and sailed the following summer with his cargo for Victoria Land. Again the weight of his influence and cunning amongst the Stone Age people harassed the local traders. More powerful now than ever, he reared posts on the mainland and placed his native sons in charge.

A few years later the Sea Wolf of the Arctic sold out his interests to the company that had unwittingly helped him to recoup his shattered fortunes for a large sum of money and retired to live

TRAILING THI AND IRAPPER





[Frank Royal

THE AUTHOR (EXTREME LEFT) PRESENTS PEACE PIPE TO HIS MAJESTY ON BEHALF OF
CHIEF HOTAIN DURING THE ROYAL VISIT TO WINNIPEG, MAY 24TH, 1939

in Vancouver. In the spring of '32 this bold and picturesque, if somewhat unscrupulous, character who had left his mark indelibly upon the Arctic passed to the Valhalla of the Vikings. It is said that his remains were cremated and his ashes carried North to be scattered to the Polar breezes from the lofty escarpment of Cape Krusenstern. It is a poetic story which fails to bear the light of investigation. For the chief mourners who bore him to his last resting-place in Vancouver were the representatives of the organization he had laughed at and defied.

If, as the Eskimos believe, one's spirit hovers near one's mortal remains, then the shade of Captain Klengenber must, that day, have emitted a ghostly chuckle of delight.

From that time on, some vital spark seemed to depart from the soul of Herschel. Enfeebled by the removal of Mounted Police and Hudson's Bay headquarters by Inspector Wood and myself in 1923 to Aklavic, Herschel, like some old roué whose misspent life had caught up with him, slipped into slow and premature decay till it was finally abandoned last summer.

The death-knell to the island and the old sea-route of the whalers was sounded when the *Lady Kindersley* was crushed in the ice off Point Barrow in 1925 and went with her eight hundred tons of ingoing cargo to join the rotting hulls of pioneer whalers in the graveyard of the Arctic. When her successor, the S.S. *Baychimo*, was caught in the ice at the same spot, to become for years an ice-festooned ghost-ship haunting the Arctic seas ere disappearing for ever with her treasure cargo of furs, the Bering Sea route became damned for all time. To-day supplies for wireless stations, R.C.M.P. detachments, trading posts and missions that dot the Western Arctic coast flow down the mighty Mississippi of the North—the Mackenzie River. Conveyed from the end of steel at Waterways by an ever-growing fleet of stern-wheeled steamers, scows, and motor-tugs to Tookiooktuk, beyond Aklavic, they are shipped on by coastwise schooners to their destination.

To-day the driftwood igloos that echoed to the raucous revelry of roystering whalers are silent and deserted. Haunted by the shades of Klengenber and the whalers who sleep beneath those storm-battered markers on Pauline Cove, Herschel Island—Cradle of Arctic Exploration—has become a deserted ghost-town. A ghost-town over which tendrils of frayed mist curling up from the pallid ice-floes form a frigid winding-sheet and the sharp bark of the Arctic foxes echo a shrill requiem.

CHAPTER XXIII
ARCTIC MADNESS

WHILE the ragged coast-line of the Western Arctic, and the treacherous waters of the North-West Passage, were becoming familiar alike to pioneer traders and trappers, and to the gallant members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police whose patrols now criss-crossed the land from end to end, there remained one vast mysterious stronghold where the Arctic gods ruled undisturbed, into which the red-coated Force had yet to penetrate.

Known as Baffin Island, this rock-girt land of eternal glaciers and angry moods lies fifteen hundred miles east of Herschel Island and extends northward a thousand miles from Hudson Straits to the Arctic archipelago, its eastern ramparts separated from Greenland by the ice-filled waters of Davis Straits.

True, the indomitable Major Moodie had paid a brief visit to its ice-girt loneliness back in 1903 while *en route* to Hudson Bay. Yet, apart from the occasional visit from a whaler, this bleak and rugged land of perpetual snow and ice had continued to be cloaked in austere and lonely isolation.

But even this far-off region was not destined to remain for ever unmolested by acquisitive whites. While the men of the Mounted were blazing new trails through the wilderness, and making the Western Arctic safe for whites and Eskimos to live in, forces were already at work in the Eastern Arctic which were to bring the awesome and treacherous beauty of Baffin Land to the notice of the outside world.

It was the summer of 1916. On the oily waters of Pond's Inlet, near the northernmost peak of Baffin Island, mountainous bergs of greenish-white crystal heaved lazily to the gentle surge of the sea. Westward the midnight sun sank in a blaze of golden glory, brushed the snow-powdered escarpments and burnished glaciers and commenced slowly to circle the sky again. Overhead screaming fulmars circled on white pinions, diving now and then to share with countless eider-ducks the fish that lurked in the pellucid depths below.

Wielding his double-bladed paddle with rhythmic strokes a lone Eskimo directed his long, needle-shaped kyak among the ice-

floes, his black eyes alert for the presence of a seal. To a height enhanced by his shaggy sealskin ahtegi Nookudlah added a breadth of shoulder and depth of chest that spoke of unusual strength, and many were the stories told in the snow igloos of the Iglulirmuits of the prowess of their leader. Of the ease with which he overcame Nanuk, the polar bear, and Ai'vuk, the walrus. Nookudlah rarely beat his wife; was a good provider, and always had lots of reindeer skins on hand for clothing, and cached, beneath stone cairns, an ample supply of meat and nice fat blubber.

Upon this monarch of the Polar wastes the red-cheeked ladies of the igloos looked with undisguised desire. But Nookudlah had eyes for only one woman, apart from his wife, that skinny little Koodloo with big eyes like a frightened caribou and a red mouth like raw meat, who wasn't even strong enough to carry a decent load upon her back. When wives were exchanged, as was the Eskimo custom at times, he always took Koodloo for himself.

As the Eskimo balanced his narrow craft and watched closely for the presence of seal there was just one cloud on his horizon. Two days before he'd killed a seal but had forgotten to break its eyes and so it had witnessed its own immolation, and bad luck, he knew, always followed the breaking of such taboos. Somehow Nookudlah felt that bad luck was impending.

Suddenly his eyes became riveted upon the horizon where a faint column of smoke stained the cobalt of the sky. Twirling his kyak he drove it with vigorous lunges to the foot of the snow-powdered escarpment which dwarfed into insignificance the puny encampment of his tribe.

"*Kablunaken killie*—The white men are coming!" yelled Nookudlah excitedly. With cries of glee the fur-clad nomads rushed from their sealskin tupeks. "*Kablunaken killie!*" shouted Nookudlah again. "Now we'll get lots of tobacco. Ho! these *Kablunats* are fine people. They know not the value of their riches. They think more of worthless white fox skins, useful only for wiping one's greasy hands on, than they do of their guns and knives."

Excitedly the natives raced backwards and forwards; talking, laughing, gossiping—wondering what the white men would have to trade. Hunters changed their ragged summer skins for wolverine-trimmed koolitans, polar bear-skin pants and best mukluks; women donned brow-bands, rubbed evil-smelling grease on their cheeks, and prepared to take the sailors' hearts by storm.

Immediately the ship dropped anchor a fleet of skin oomiaks

converged upon it. Up the rope ladder struggled men, women and children, assisted by the sailors. With murmurs of awe they roamed the decks, gazed at the wealth of wood and shining metal, and thought of the journeys many moons to the southward they had to make to obtain even the smallest stick for their kyak frames or bows and arrows.

The Captain, a big white man wearing a shiny peaked cap, grinned and pressed each by the hand, while another, dressed all in white "skins", brought out a huge kettle filled with hot sweet tea and placed before them biscuits—round things that looked like bone but broke easily between their teeth and tasted good.

One man amongst these *Kablunats* the Huskies didn't take to. Like themselves he was an Eskimo, but acted very proud. He dressed and behaved like a white man, and talked a lot. He told them that out of their love for the Eskimos these *Kablunats* were going to build a big wooden "igloo" ashore and fill it with guns, axes, and coloured "skins" such as the white men used for clothing. And all they wanted in exchange were just the fox and polar bear-skins Nookudlah and his tribe could gather.

As they paddled ashore that night, leaving their women behind them, the shaggy hunters laughed loudly and delightedly. All night they talked about the good fortune that had come their way. Next day they helped the white men carry load after load of bales and boxes from the whaleboats to where the wooden house was already rising from the rocks.

But wonders hadn't ceased. Two days later another ship beat her way through the grinding ice and dropped anchor close inshore—a dilapidated-looking schooner called the *Kite*. Unable to display further excitement, these simple children of the Polar wastes sweated and laughed and continued to pack the loads up from the boats.

With characteristic astuteness the Eskimos were quick to note one thing. Captain Robert Janes, the short man with peaked features, flaming hair and sunken blue eyes who had come on the *Kite*, didn't seem as rich as the others. Nookudlah's wife, Innoyah, told, too, of hearing him and the white chief in the big oomiak talking loudly, as though angry. Janes had turned his back upon the other, waving his fists in the air as though calling upon the spirits. What had these men to quarrel about, they wondered, with all these riches? Truly, it was hard to understand.

When the ships sailed away there stood upon the bleak shores of Pond's Inlet, three thousand five hundred miles north of New York, two puny shacks. One belonged to the Arctic Gold Company, with Joe Florence in charge, and the other, situated less than a mile away, belonged to Captain Janes.

The Janes post was a miserable hovel of rough lumber, tarpaper and slats, but to the Eskimos it was a palace of enchantment. For one end was filled with shining guns and trading goods and glittering knives and kettles. And the big black "*kudlik*" in which he burned "black rocks", as they called the coal, gave out so much more heat than their own stone blubber lamps.

"Jen", as the Eskimos called the Captain, had espied the rugged cliffs of Baffin Island from the deck of a Canadian Government patrol vessel back in 1910. Infatuated by this mysterious land of glaciers, icebergs, fur-clad Eskimos and polar bears, he decided to form a trading company to reap a rich harvest of white fox pelts from these untutored savages. In fact, he was inflicted with much the same urge as was the audacious Captain Klengenbergl. It was virgin territory, this, where Arctic foxes could be bought for next to nothing and sold Outside for fabulous prices. Not until this year, however, had he found a friend to finance him. Finally he had chartered the *Kite*, loaded her with two years' supply of food and trading goods and sailed from his Newfoundland home for the Arctic.

A man of vicious temper and strange moods, his earlier trip aboard the Government ship had been beset with frequent quarrels. Now he had quarrelled with the man who had backed his expedition on the very point of departure. And, to add fuel to the fire of misunderstanding, he had run up bills for unauthorized goods from traders along the Labrador, telling them to charge them to his backer.

Soon winter descended upon the lonely land. The sun disappeared behind the rugged snow-capped mountains and the long Arctic night set in. Stinging, biting cold sealed pools and lakes in an iron grasp, while the salt bay was fringed with an ever-accumulating mass of ice. Rolling fogs and vapours, rising from the sea, ascended the wild mountains, further darkening the sky. Furious blizzards of many days duration, shrieking down from the Pole, covered the puny huts deep beneath mountainous drifts of snow. Upon the sea, now black as indigo, floated huge frowning icebergs which had broken away from the ancient glaciers to the northward.

Janes had expected to have this frigid kingdom for his own; to be the uncrowned king of these shaggy, fur-clad Eskimos. But as time went on the very thought of having to share the spoils with his rival, Florence, bred an ever-increasing bitterness in his soul. Soon the Eskimos were treated to the strange spectacle of these two lone white men, separated by thousands of miles of glacial wilderness from others of their kind, and having at their disposal the entire resources of an area larger than many a European kingdom, squabbling over fox skins; hating each other with unspeakable bitterness, and refusing to look at each other when they happened to meet face to face.

Having expected so much from these god-like white men, Nookudlah and his tribesmen found it difficult to understand their peculiar actions and rabid greed for pelts. When one Eskimo had plenty, and others less, they pooled their luck. Why didn't these white men do likewise, live together, laugh and have a good time?

The natives took a fancy to Florence. He was genial, open-handed and good-natured. But Janes would fly into a fierce rage if they sold furs to his rival, wave his fists in the air, swear and act like one possessed of evil spirits. At last they became afraid of the red-haired Captain, avoided him and sneaked stealthily over to Florence's place to do their trading.

One day Janes called them over. This time he was laughing. He would pay them *more* than Florence, and they didn't even need to have the skins with them. They could trade out foxes yet untrapped and roaming over the sidehills . . . and bring them in later when they caught them! The Huskies laughed in sheer delight. This certainly was a fine idea. None but a white man could think of such a thing. Never before had an Eskimo been able to get anything without paying for it in advance in hardship and gruelling labour. Like rats leaving a sinking ship, they deserted Florence and flocked back again to Janes.

Spring gave way to summer, but something delayed the Arctic Gold ship. Anxious and worried, his post bare of supplies and food, Florence roamed the crags from dawn till dusk, gazing ever out to sea. Slowly, inexorably, the short Arctic summer drew to a close—and still no Arctic Gold ship. At last Eskimo women brought word to Janes that Florence was starving. He'd used up the last of his supplies and was looking lean and gaunt. Janes merely chuckled.

When he realized at last that there was no longer a chance

of seeing the supply ship for a year at least panic clutched at Florence's heart. At first he could not bring himself to call upon Janes for help. But the gnawing pangs of hunger soon caused him to change his mind. With no goods in the Arctic Gold store Janes was free to rule the natives. Anyway, Florence argued, one white man could hardly sit back and see another starve. Throwing himself into a chair he scribbled a list of things he would require to keep body and soul together: just flour, bacon, tea, and one or two other staples. At Montreal the whole list would cost around a couple of hundred dollars. Worming into his parki he trudged across the rocks towards the opposition post.

Florence had not expected a cordial reception, but the calculated coldness—the crafty gleam of avarice and cunning that shone in Janes' rat-like eyes—acted like a frigid douche to his hopes. With a set smile of desperation upon his pallid features he faced his enemy.

"Cap'n," he blurted out, "I'm stuck. Cleaned out of everything. It's too late for the ship now. I want grub enough to see me through the winter." With shaking hand he held out the paper. "Here's what I need—and I need it bad."

"Sure, Florence—sure I'll help you out." Janes made no attempt to disguise his exultation. "I'll let you have the stuff you want, but—at my own price. Mind—at *my own price*. You'll have to give me half your last winter's trade in foxes!"

"*What!*" Florence turned livid. "Five thousand dollars worth of furs for a couple of hundred dollars worth of grub? You're crazy . . ." he faltered. "The fur isn't mine to give away. I couldn't do it."

"Take it or leave it!" Janes turned coldly on his heel.

Florence left it. Dazed—realizing for the first time the full extent of his plight—he staggered, unseeing, across the rocks towards the poverty-stricken post. A cold blast whipped his face with stinging particles of snow. Winter, cold, cruel, ruthless winter, wasn't far away. How was he going to exist without food or fuel throughout those long, awful months ahead till ship-time came again?

Help came from an unexpected source. The Eskimos brought him blubber to burn and meat to eat. So, going native, Florence lived like the Huskies themselves on half-raw reindeer meat and the nauseating flesh of seal and polar bear.

As Janes continued to prosper, his arrogance increased. In one of the igloos lived a rosy-cheeked girl named Koodloo.

Occasionally he'd given her needles and other presents from the store, and suggested that she be his housekeeper. But Koodloo hesitated. Did not the great man, Nookudlah, look upon her with friendly eyes, and sometimes take her to his igloo? So, Eskimo-fashion, Janes made a deal with her husband and both of them soon were installed within his shack.

Slowly whisperings spread among the igloos. "Jen" had stolen Nookudlah's woman! What would happen? The chief's visits to the trading post, they noticed, became more frequent, and he would return with an angry scowl.

Janes, too, was consumed with anger. What did this confounded Huskie want about his place? He was always making eyes at Koodloo. Twice the Eskimo's murderous gaze had burned into his blue eyes as he abruptly ordered him from the store. Janes cursed and raved about the place. "I *hate* that dog, Nookudlah!" he stormed. "I don't feed and clothe you, Koodloo, for the likes of him. I'll shoot the dog next time he sticks his nose in here."

As the moccasin telegraph brought word of Janes' threats to the igloos Nookudlah grasped his bone-tipped harpoon, crawled outside and stood gazing with smouldering eyes through the purple night at the orange square of light in the black wall of the trader's dwelling. It would be as easy to kick open the door and plunge his spear through the body of this "Jen" as it would to harpoon a seal. For a long time he stood there, glowering through the gloom, while Janes, but a few short yards away, little realized that his fate rested on the turn of that savage mind. At last the Eskimo's grip on the wooden shaft relaxed. No! It wasn't good to quarrel with a white man. He would hitch up his dogs in the morning and leave with his tribesmen for the country to the northward.

July saw Janes pacing the shore impatiently. His own supplies were exhausted now, exchanged for bales upon bales of white fox pelts; a small fortune waiting to be shipped aboard the already overdue *Kite*. The Arctic Gold ship, *Albert*, came and sailed away, leaving Florence's store filled to the very rafters. No longer did Florence have occasion to worry. It was Janes who was doing the worrying now. Days passed into weeks, without a sign of the expected *Kite*. Ice commenced to fill the inlet, then, with remorseless certainty, winter once again clamped down upon the lonely land.

Thin, attenuated and famished, Janes twice started over to see

Florence to borrow food supplies, but each time something held him back.

The Eskimos did *not* come to Janes' assistance. "Jen" was poor, they said. He helped no one when he was rich. Let him eat those fox skins he loved so well. Avoiding him they traded once again with Florence. In desperation Janes roamed the coast-line, finally exchanging fox pelts with the natives for the flesh of seal and polar bear. At first the Eskimos passed close to his post with their fur packs. But "Jen" would run out, wild-eyed and raving, claw at their packs, demanding payment of the debts they owed. Finally they avoided him altogether.

Long ere any ship could possibly arrive Janes renewed his vigil. Gaunt and hungry as a wolf he haunted the crags, his haggard eyes fixed ever out to sea.

Again the Arctic Gold ship arrived, but not a word of the missing *Kite*. Beset with tortured mind, and the fear that his backer, becoming angry, had abandoned him, Janes watched the *Albert* discharge the last of her supplies. Suddenly a wave of overwhelming longing swept over him; a desire to abandon this sterile, cruel land and sail southward to his trim little wife in far-off St. John's and that cottage by the sea. In an hour now the ship would leave. Unable to stand the strain a moment longer he went tumbling down the rocks, leapt into the skiff and pulled frantically for the *Albert*, fearful that she might pull anchor ere he got there.

The Captain of the *Albert* received the exile coldly, recalling vividly the plight of his own trader but a couple of years before. As Janes listened to his terms hope withered in his heart. They were the identical terms he, himself, had imposed on Florence when positions were reversed. In vain, Janes searched the granite face for a sign of mercy, then, his eyesight blurred and misty, he stumbled down the rope ladder and pulled towards the shore.

A hungry exile of great wealth, useless to him as so much trash, he staggered into his empty shack, buried his head in his arms and faced the future with tortured despair. But, despite his many failings, Janes did not lack courage. His first paroxysm of despair over he faced the situation with inflexible calm. His enemies were exulting in his downfall. Well—damn them all—he'd beat them yet. Slowly there took form within the mind of this distraught and lonely man the idea of loading his furs upon a dog-sled and mushing south to the Mounted Police post at Chesterfield Inlet.

None but a half-demented man would have considered such a long and terrible journey. Fifteen hundred miles afoot over rough sea-ice and blizzard-swept barrens, where even the Eskimos were oft-times driven to cannibalism, and where the travel was of the roughest. But the prospect served as an anchor to his sanity, and a winter of despair was tempered by his determination to beat his enemies yet.

February was drawing to a close when Janes drove his slant-eyed huskies and overloaded komatik towards a village of dome-shaped igloos at Cape Crawford, northernmost peak of Baffin Land. As Janes and his Eskimo guide, Ootookito, carried their fur sleeping-bags into a snow igloo he realized instinctively that he was anything but welcome.

Note-book in hand, he trudged next morning from one snow-house to another, determined still to collect his debts ere heading southward. Blank faces met him everywhere. Too stubborn to give up, he continued to exhort and argue and threaten. At last his fiery temper broke. From igloo to igloo he stormed and cursed. "I'll shoot you," he thundered. "I'll kill your dogs and leave you to starve." The Eskimos were frightened. Quietly Ootookito sneaked away and hid his master's rifle beneath a pile of deerskins. He'd seen "Jen" go this way before.

Next day the Eskimos, crouching over their seal holes out on the ice, were startled by an avalanche of frightened women. "Jen" had gone queer again. They were afraid to stay around the igloos. But their fears were put at rest when Ootookito arrived later to say that Janes was now all right—he was getting dogs and sled ready for his journey to the southward.

Janes awakened next morning in high good-humour. "To hell with the furs!" he shouted. "Come—feast and make merry, for to-morrow 'Jen' is leaving."

As the sun dipped below the blue piled-up pressure-ridges the blubber banquet continued by the flickering red light of stone *kudliks*. Suddenly there came a pandemonium of barking dogs and jangling bells which penetrated the snow wall of the igloo. Janes' eyes narrowed, flashing anger and suspicion. "Who's that?" he snarled as Ootookito crawled back in after a glance round.

"Him trader from Pond's Inlet," vouchsafed the guide, anticipating another display of furious anger. But Janes' frown turned to laughter. He sang, laughed and imitated the dancers as they went through the mummery of stalking and harpooning the

seal and polar bear. An oily face appeared in the doorway. He recognized Ooroorengnak.

"Come 'Jen'," the Eskimo beckoned. "Nookudlah—he pay'um debt. . . . Gib'um plenty white fox."

Janes laughed aloud. His luck had changed. At last he'd thrown a scare into the mighty Nookudlah. Their leader friendly, the rest would follow his example. First he'd collect his debt from the chief, then he'd find out why that damned trader had trailed him from Pond's Inlet.

He stepped outside. The whole Arctic world was bathed in the greenish phosphorescence of the Aurora. What a ghostly place it was. How deathly still. Ooroorengnak grinned and beckoned. The purple dome of a snow igloo arose before him. He stepped across a komatik that lay athwart the doorway.

CHAPTER XXIV
SERGEANT JOY TAKES UP THE TRAIL

THE unpretentious barracks at Ottawa, headquarters for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, was a busy place in the spring of 1921. Tall, broad-shouldered men in scarlet tunics, shining boots and glittering buttons moved here and there with jingling spurs. Cars rolled up, dapper Inspectors stepped briskly out and hurried to their offices. Burly of figure, Sergeant Joy was chatting with a bronzed officer from down Mackenzie way. "Wish the devil I was hitting the trail for God's country myself." There was regret in Joy's voice at the prospect of uneventful routine duty in the city. "Hello! There's my 'phone."

He was back in a couple of minutes. "The Old Man," he explained. "Something doing up Baffin Land way. See you later."

Assistant Commissioner Starnes, courtly, dark-skinned, with upturned moustache and large, expressive eyes, greeted him crisply, and Joy's eyes lighted as he unfolded the story of the mysterious disappearance of the trader Janes in the heart of unmapped Baffin Land. "That's all I can tell you, Sergeant." The officer handed him a file. "Read this over. The rest is up to you."

At first the immensity of his task did not impress itself upon Joy. The main thing was he'd be out in God's wide-open spaces once again. Slowly, however, the picture presented itself in its broader and grimmer aspects. Single-handed, he was to scour an untrodden waste of blizzard-lashed glaciers and eternal ice, thousands of square miles in extent; a world of unutterable loneliness inhabited by a handful of Stone Age savages and wrapped for six months of the year in a frigid cloak of purple darkness. Somewhere in this infinity of whiteness he must locate this man called Robert Janes.

When the *Baychimo* put him ashore in a whaleboat at Pond's Inlet along with Gaston Herodier, who was to establish a post there for the Hudson's Bay Company, Joy found his lonely kingdom more rugged and forbidding than he had visualized. The box-like trading posts, and scattered tupeks of the Stone Age

savages, seemed unutterably puny against the rugged background of Baffin Land's eternal glaciers. Instead of being friendly the Eskimos seemed actually hostile, while even the interpreters around the posts appeared resentful of his presence. An impenetrable and sinister barrier of distrust and suspicion blocked every avenue of inquiry. Even those two essentials to Arctic travel: skin clothing and seal, or polar bear meat, for dog-feed were almost impossible to obtain.

That there had been bad blood between Janes and the Arctic Gold trader he knew, and he had heard of quarrels with the Eskimos. Apart from the suspicions these facts naturally aroused there remained the possibility that anything might happen to a man travelling the route he proposed to take along the rugged ice-scarred coast.

Possessed, one day, by a hunch he couldn't have explained, Joy picked up his binoculars, stepped outside and casually scanned the snow-covered mountains. On the point of lowering them he decided to take another look. This time his glance was long and searching. A small black object, evidently not a reindeer, was moving down the mountainside. Slipping on his ahtegi he strode over the rocks and boulders, skirted the Eskimo encampment and proceeded to climb the sidehill. An hour later he came face to face with a strange Eskimo. That the man had travelled a long distance was obvious, for his skin clothes were ragged, his pack-dogs thin and gaunt, while on his back was a pack containing skin bedding from which a couple of harpoons protruded.

"*Chimo!*" Joy held out his hand in greeting.

"*Chimo!*" grinned the travel-worn Huskie, looking at the outstretched hand in evident embarrassment.

Back at the barracks the stranger, whose name was Kumapik, proved a positive mine of information. Not only had he heard of "Jen" but he knew the names of all the Eskimos who were at Cape Crawford when the trader passed there long before. A feed of hard-tack, jam and bully-beef caused the Eskimo's grin to extend from ear to ear and further loosened his tongue. Unrolling a map Joy watched his greasy finger trace Janes' journey. At Arctic Bay it halted. There, he said, about two hundred miles to the northward, were camped the Eskimos who had last seen the missing trader.

It was December when Joy set out for Arctic Bay after an unsuccessful attempt to reach there by motor-boat. Dog-feed and skin clothing had been strangely difficult to obtain. Always he

had sensed that impalpable feeling of hostility about him. Joe, his interpreter, was morose. "Dese moon—him bad moon for trabble," he confided. "Him hungry moon. Mebbe no seal. Mebbe no *tooktoo*. Mebbe everyone him starve." Joy cracked his five-fathom lash of walrus hide over the pointed ears of his wire-haired huskies, the ice-shod komatik slewed forward and they were on their way.

Arctic darkness hung heavily upon the land as Joy hit the trail to the northward. Rarely did the hardest travel at this time of year on account of the bitter cold, the poor visibility and the constantly raging blizzards. Even the frigid luxury of a snow-house was often denied them at night as the mountains of up-ended shore-ice broke the sweep of the wind, preventing the snow from hardening sufficiently to be cut into blocks for an igloo. Monster bergs, anchored in the sea-ice, looked strangely spectral under the starlight or beneath the luminous green rays of the Aurora. Westward the wild mountains, which arose like an indigo cloud in the velvet half-light, appeared actually to be smoking like volcanoes as loose snow swirled and eddied about their jagged crests.

Day after day the heart-breaking, soul-trying struggle with pressure-ridges, rough ice, and the unrelenting forces of Nature continued. Food ran short; dogs dropped and died from sheer exhaustion, and Joy commenced to wonder if they themselves weren't going to leave their bones for the gaunt grey wolves to pick. Never in all his life had he experienced such slow and terrible travelling. At night he shrunk within himself in his sleeping-bag in a vain effort to avoid the chilling clutch of icy fingers. Day after day the knife-edged winds whirled down from the mighty glaciers. Loose veils of snow, undulating across anchored bergs and pressure-ridges, hurled themselves into the very teeth of the blasts with such wild paroxysms of rage that there seemed at times a dearth of air with which to fill one's lungs.

From out of the murk of flailing snow and whirling flakes Joy stumbled against something that appeared to have been made by human hands. The dogs emitted low, menacing barks. Then a dark object seemed to arise at their very feet. It was a crippled Eskimo, who led them down into a snowed-in igloo where he and his family, with Oriental fatalism, had already resigned themselves to a slow death by starvation.

From his carefully husbanded supply of dog-feed Joy gave the starving people a little food, and the cripple agreed to lead

them to Arctic Bay in return for a modicum of seal meat to keep the spark of life within his family.

As they slept in a hastily improvised snowhouse a few nights later Joy was awakened by a noise without. Pushing aside the snow-block he gazed into the purple void and shouted. When no further sound broke the stillness he rolled the snow-block back in place and fell asleep. Next morning he heard the cripple shouting. Crawling outside he observed him pointing to the snow. Plainly outlined were the tracks of a polar bear. As they slept one of these Arctic monsters had actually sniffed about their snowhouse, the dogs being so utterly worn out as to be oblivious to its presence. A ton of meat and fat had passed within a few feet of them, and here they were—on the thin edge of starvation. Joy cursed the dogs. If only they had barked!

At last, through a purple veil of drifting snow, they espied the beehive-shaped igloos of the Iglulirmuits. From the black caverns of the snow-tunnels shaggy figures, armed with harpoons and bows and arrows, tumbled out upon the ice and ran towards them shouting. The cripple held aloft his snow-knife in the peace sign. But the natives were suspicious. Let the *Kablunat* remain where he was, they signalled. Alone the Eskimo hobbled uneasily across to join the shaggy horde of savages. For a while they pressed round him, and Joy listened apprehensively as their guttural speech rolled back across the snowdrifts. Suddenly they broke away and came running straight in his direction. With childish glee they examined his beard and stroked his chin. What had he come for—fox skins? No! Then it must be whalebone or women. It was always one of these three things the *Kablunats* desired.

While fur-clad figures unhitched his dogs and ran them off Joy followed an oily-faced guide down a long tunnel till he emerged in a capacious snowhouse lighted with the red flame of a smoky blubber lamp. For a moment the heat and rancid odour almost overcame him. With a desperate effort he conquered the dangerous drowsiness, knowing that Eskimos will sometimes simulate friendship to throw a fancied enemy off his guard—then stab, or shoot, him in the back.

Gazing about the icy cavern at stone lamps, mauls, pots and greasy skin-clad Eskimos, Joy realized that he'd stepped into a world ten thousand years removed from that to which he was accustomed. His eyes met the owl-like orbs of a wizened savage, obviously an *angatkuk*. Joy handed him a knife, a few needles,

fish-hooks, some sugar and some hard-tack. The old man's eyes flickered, but his malevolent expression remained unchanged.

From a stone pot the dusky hostess hooked out a piece of fat seal meat, politely licked the gravy off, and passed it to the Mountie.

Supper over, Joy brought the conversation round to Janes. To his utter astonishment the natives talked quite freely. Almost before he knew it he held the key to this enigma of ice-bound Baffin Land.

The story told so naïvely by these Stone Age people went back to a March day two years before when Janes was preparing to leave the Eskimo village at Cape Crawford for the south. He had threatened to kill their dogs, which would have left them helpless and at the mercy of the elements. While the Captain was feasting and singing, the headmen were engaged in deep deliberation. Then Ooroorengnak was sent to fetch the trader. As "Jen" stepped across the komatik to enter the council igloo there came a loud report. Janes clutched at his side and stared dumbly at his hand—it was stained with blood. From holes in the snow walls keen eyes watched his every move. Too obstinate to give up without a fight, Janes struggled to remain upon his feet. Another whip-like crack. A sharp impact. Again he tottered. Across the empurpled snowdrifts writhed a shadowy figure. A quick push and Janes collapsed upon his back. Over the prostrate trader loomed a giant figure clad in furs. Janes looked into a pair of wild, malevolent eyes. The cold muzzle of a rifle sought his forehead. The oily face grinned. Another sharp report . . . and Janes' search for furs had ended. Pots were filled. All crowded around the dusky hero, and far out over the empurpled wastes polar bear-gut drums boomed out their notes of rejoicing.

"Who sent for the trader?" inquired Joy.

"Nookudlah!" shouted half a dozen voices proudly.

"And—who led him to his death?"

The natives stammered in confusion. They laughed, then oily fingers pointed at the cripple. "Ooroorengnak!" they said.

For a moment Joy was too amazed to speak. For a week he had actually been travelling with one of the murderers he sought without in the least suspecting it, even sleeping beside him at night.

"And what did they do with the trader's body?" he turned to Joe.

"Dè Huskies say dey put him in skins and hide him in de

rocks two sleeps away," replied Joe, adding that Quarquaruak, an Eskimo trader from Pond's Inlet, had arrived at the village just before the shooting, and was so scared by what had taken place that he refused to sleep in any of the igloos and built a snow-house of his own some distance from the village.

At last the crowd dispersed and Joy stretched his shingabee upon the snow-shelf. With a complete disregard for sex, and an equal lack of self-consciousness, men, women and children stripped to the skin and crawled into their sleeping-bags. Soon the sound of deep breathing, and the occasional whimper of a puppy, was all that broke the stillness of the night.

Next day Joy hitched up the dogs and set out to search for the body of the trader. In a snow-filled defile high up on a rocky shelf he uncovered a pile of rocks and found beneath it the frozen body of the man he sought. A wave of overwhelming pity caused the Mountie's eyes to dim as he gazed upon the wasted frame and the marble face, seared deep with lines of suffering. Bullet holes in the skin koolitan bore out the story told him of the killing. So—this was the end of Janes' search for foxes . . . the end of his dream of furry wealth!

CHAPTER XXV
THE WAYS OF THE KABLUNATS

DESPITE the fact that he had solved the mystery of Janes' disappearance, located the frozen body of the trader, and knew the names of the killers, Joy realized that his real work was just commencing. The Government patrol vessel, the S.S. *Arctic*, would arrive at Pond's Inlet in July. Between now and then it would be necessary to hold an inquest, get all the witnesses together, and accomplish the arrest of Nookudlah and Ahteetah, who was also involved in the killing, in time to send out a full report to Ottawa by return of the ship. The slightest flaw would mean at least a year's delay. The first step would be to return to the village at Arctic Bay and arrange to take the witnesses back with him to Pond's Inlet. And since the women and children depended on the men to hunt their living for them this would entail taking their families along as well.

Back at the village Joy told the Eskimos of his decision. Not for a moment did they hesitate to do the bidding of the *Kablunat* despite the inconvenience it would cause them. Although travelling was dangerous at this time of the year they immediately made preparations for the journey. Clothing, shingabees, and dog-harness were mended, and seals killed for dog-feed and rations. Then, one morning, with much yelling and snapping of dog-whips the cavalcade of dog-drawn komatiks, piled high with frozen meat, furs, stone pots and primitive mauls and weapons, lurched across the violet-tinted drifts beneath the twinkling stars.

The return journey proved even more desperately soul-trying than the outward one with those clumsy heavy-laden komatiks and all those hungry mouths to feed, which necessitated constant stops for hunting. Blizzards often kept them in one spot for days at a time. Dog-feed and rations failed. Day after day they struggled on over starlit drifts, fighting the paralysing cold, helping each other haul the sleds over piled-up pressure-ridges or making wide detours to avoid bottomless crevices in the glacial ice.

Lean and attenuated with hunger, their haggard eyes at last observed a large polar bear lumbering over the ice hummocks,

frightened by the barking of dogs and the smell of human beings. Crazy with the bear odour, the dogs gave chase, leaping over the rough sea-ice in a frenzy of excitement, tumbling the komatiks from side to side, chipping the ice shooing from the runners. When a pressure-ridge momentarily halted the wild pursuit Joy and the Eskimos slashed the traces. In a few minutes the frightened and infuriated monster was surrounded by a horde of leaping, snapping, snarling huskies. Rising upon his hind feet the bear flailed the air with enormous paws as the dogs leapt in, biting and snapping at his flanks. Wild with excitement a young dog, less wary than the rest, came within striking distance of those murderous paws and in a split second lay twenty feet away, a gory mess, entirely disembowelled. Two well-placed bullets brought the bear crashing down upon the sea-ice. While the body still twitched and shuddered the knives of the women bit deep into the carcass, reducing it swiftly to a mass of raw, red meat and gleaming bone. Encouraged by the Eskimos, the dogs lapped avidly at the still warm blood which would cause them to become fierce and savage the moment they scented the bear odour again.

When the Stone Age cavalcade crunched into Pond's Inlet a formal inquest was held, with Sergeant Joy as coroner, and the responsibility for Janes' death placed upon Nookudlah; Ahteetah and Ooroorengnak being named as accomplices, and warrants issued for the arrest of all three. Ooroorengnak was already, to all intents and purposes, a prisoner, but it would be necessary to allow him to return to his wife and family in order to prevent them from starving, so he departed with orders to return in the summer when the sun was high.

There remained the apparently insurmountable task of arresting and bringing in Nookudlah and Ahteetah. Nookudlah was reported to be hunting some five hundred miles to the south-east, and Ahteetah looking for musk-ox a like distance to the north-west, with almost impenetrable glaciers and ice-fields between them and the post. Yet it was essential they be brought in before the arrival of the ship, a project of no small difficulty in a country of such vast distances, with such slow and primitive means of communication. Joy decided to send word to them by the first hunters who might come in, saying that he desired to talk with them.

The Sergeant's persistent efforts to break down the hostility of the local natives had already borne fruit, and by this time he

had a number of warm aboriginal friends among the igloos. Weeks passed by, then one night a shadowy figure slipped into the barracks. It was an Eskimo named Ai'vuk, and it was evident that he bore important tidings.

"Nookudlah mans him come for trade," Joe interpreted Ai'vuk's guttural whisper. "Dem Huskies all hab hard time. Dogs dey all die from sickness. Nookudlah he no come. Him say him hear policeman want for see him. If dat so he say you send him talk and he come in."

Next day Joy despatched a message by one of Nookudlah's followers and impatiently settled down to wait.

Consumed with anxiety he saw the sun climb higher and higher in the sky and ship-time draw closer. True to his word Ooroorengnak had come in with his family. Then Ahteetah's brother arrived with word that Ahteetah had gone far to the west to hunt the musk-ox; that he would not be back for another year. Grinding his teeth in impotent rage Joy strode over to the encampment and called to Ai'vuk. For a long time they talked together. Then, with set lips, Joy strode back to the post and sent Joe to bring in Ahteetah's brother.

"Since when," he demanded coldly, "did you think you could lie to the Police? Your brother awaits you only two sleeps from here. You are to take him food and cartridges, and then you both intend to flee." He caught the cowering Eskimo by the shoulder. "You and your family will not leave this post," he snapped. "You will remain here as my prisoner till your brother arrives. I am sending out Ai'vuk to bring him in."

Unable to meet Joy's accusing eyes, Edinah shuffled uneasily. Then, Eskimo-like, he admitted that what the *Kablunat* said was true. He would, he said, send word with Ai'vuk to his brother, telling him to come in so there would be no trouble. Four days later Ahteetah arrived and erected his tupek beside the barracks.

Nookudlah had promised to arrive when the sun ceased to sleep and hide behind the mountains. But the chief had failed to put in an appearance. Joy glanced anxiously out to sea. Any moment now the deep-throated wail of the *Arctic's* siren might come echoing over those blue waters dotted with mountainous bergs and pans of heaving floe-ice.

A shadow fell athwart the doorway. The Sergeant rose to his feet. Before him stood a tall, broad-shouldered savage. With a disarming smile the native extended his hand and gave voice to the customary greeting: "*Chimo!*" he grinned. Then, in

sonorous tones, he added: "Me Nookudlah!"

Joy pressed the hand of his thrice welcome prisoner warmly. Summoning the interpreter he talked for a long time with the chief. Some underlying instinct seemed from the first to establish 'twixt savage and white man a bond of mutual esteem and admiration. Soon they were both fast friends.

At the preliminary hearing that followed, the story of the killing of the trader was repeated with little variation. The accused spoke without the slightest reticence regarding the part they had taken in ridding their land of "that mad dog 'Jen'". At the conclusion all three prisoners were committed to stand trial a year hence when the Government would send in a Judge and lawyers.

Hardly was the hearing over ere the distant boom of the *Arctic's* siren echoed and reverberated over the ice that had drifted into the inlet, rendering it impassable to the steamer. Only with the utmost difficulty was Joy able to reach her in a whaleboat and hand to the purser a package addressed to the Commissioner at Ottawa containing full details of the arrest of Janes' murderers and of the findings of the local court.

When, a year later, the S.S. *Arctic* nosed her way through the floe-ice and dropped anchor in Pond's Inlet a wave of pleasurable excitement swept the sealskin tupeks of the Iglulirmuits, for they had a hazy feeling that they were going to witness another exhibition of white man's magic.

They had witnessed one already. For had not this big *Kablunat*, Joy, given exhibitions of white man's magic in transforming with a few simple words the powerful and fearless Nookudlah into a calm and peaceful man, causing him to come many moons across rocky glaciers and snow-filled canyons to submit tamely to the white man's will—and all without a struggle?

From a lofty crag a fur-clad savage also watched the busy scene as whaleboat after whaleboat rowed ashore, disgorging more and more strange *Kablunats* upon the beach. Seated upon his shoulder young Petoot gurgled with excitement at the novel scene. So intent was the Eskimo that he failed to notice a red-coated figure approaching until a hand fell gently upon his shoulder. "Come, my friend." It was Joy's voice. "My masters wish to see you."

Beneath the smoky rays of the midnight sun was enacted the last act in this drama of the snows. Flanked by his red-coated

escort, and lawyers in flowing silk, sat Judge Rivet of Montreal facing the Stone Age prisoners in the dock and a jury of traders and sailors from the ship. Upon the floor squatted the Iglulirmuit elders, their oily faces exuding perspiration as they wondered what the fuss was all about.

At last the jury delivered their verdict: Nookudlah, guilty of manslaughter; Ooroorengnak, of being an accessory, while Ahteetah was discharged.

A disturbing problem faced Judge Rivet. The white man had invaded the Arctic fastnesses of these Stone Age Eskimos, bringing new customs and new laws of which they knew absolutely nothing. But a white man had been killed! And even these Polar regions must be made safe for the whites to trade their guns and knives for fox and polar bear skins. A sentence to be worked out at Pond's Inlet would not impress the natives, while imprisonment in a white man's penitentiary would be tantamount to a death warrant since such confinement would bring tuberculosis inevitably in its train. Still, the white man's law must be upheld. Solemnly the Judge sentenced Ooroorengnak to two years' detention at Pond's Inlet, and Nookudlah to ten years in Stony Mountain Penitentiary.

Immediately Corporals Tredgold and Fairman closed in on the once mighty Nookudlah. With bowed head—without being permitted to say a word of farewell to his wife or child or any of his tribesmen—he was hurried past his people, the cries of Innayah and Petoot ringing in his ears, and hurried aboard the waiting ship. Some other man would take his wife now, and Petoot would be a fatherless orphan. Nookudlah's pride was broken. No greater humiliation could have been visited upon the leader of the Iglulirmuits.

As the ship steamed slowly out to sea a group of puzzled natives stood silently upon the spot where, but a few short years before, they had welcomed the whites with joy and laughter. Yet, instead of joy they had reaped naught but sorrow and disillusionment. And even as they watched, the ship that bore their broken hero from them grew smaller and smaller until it merged at last into the blue and white horizon.

Long after the other Eskimos had returned to their tupeks two figures stood silhouetted upon a lonely crag, their tear-filled eyes fixed out to sea. One was the broken-hearted wife of Nookudlah. The other was her son Petoot. Verily the white man's ways were hard to understand!

CHAPTER XXVI

THE THIN RED LINE MOVES NORTHWARD

THE opening up of the Western Arctic had followed swiftly on the heels of the discovery of the Cogmollock Eskimos and the patrols of Colonel French and Inspector LaNauze into what, to most Americans, had, until then, been a *terra incognita*. Now Joy's exploit in scouring the rugged interior of Baffin Land for the murderers of Captain Janes brought even that remote land to the attention of the people of Canada and the United States. It also centred attention on the mist-enshrouded islands that lay broken and scattered and unexplored between Baffin Land and the Mounted Police outposts in the Western Arctic.

Although they had been considered worthless in the past, it now commenced to dawn on the Canadian Government that this vast chain of ice-girt islands, which had proven a death-trap to scores of gallant mariners in the past, might hold in their granite bosoms riches of incalculable worth and that they might, in years to come, prove valuable strategic bases in inter-continental air routes.

The chill allurements of his frigid kingdom had long since captured the heart and imagination of Staff-Sergeant Joy and fired him with a zest to learn more of this mysterious, untrodden land; and the winter of 1924 found him setting out from Pond's Inlet with dog-team, komatik and Eskimo snowhouse-builders on the first of a series of exploratory journeys—this time to the ice-girt shores of lonely but magnificent Ellesmere Land. The same year Ottawa received from him seven hundred valuable anthropological specimens excavated from the ruins of the stone igloos once occupied by the extinct Stone House Builders, a race of Eskimos who had preceded the present-day Eskimos and been completely destroyed by them.¹

In the spring of 1926 Joy was once more upon the trail, crunching behind his dog-team on a nine hundred and seventy-

¹ On Southampton Island in Hudson Bay the last surviving remnant of this race was wiped out by a typhoid epidemic brought among them by whalers in the winter of 1902.—P.H.G.

five mile journey afoot from Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Land to Axel Heiberg Island by way of Jones' Sound. On August 6th of the same year he further distinguished himself by establishing at Bache Peninsula, within eight hundred miles of the North Pole, the northernmost Police post in the world.

With Bache Peninsula as a base Joy continued to scour the glacier-covered islands by the light of the twinkling stars, at times chopping a foothold in treacherous sloping ice, bridging dangerous fissures with his komatik, facing almost continuous knife-edged winds, living on the caribou and seal and polar bears that fell before his rifle, camping at night within the cramped confines of a hastily-erected igloo and thawing his food over a hissing Primus stove. Ere the season had ended Joy had covered two thousand one hundred and fifteen miles on foot, which included a fifty-four day hike of one thousand three hundred and twenty miles with a couple of Eskimos across the glacial cap of Ellesmere Land to Axel Heiberg, Sverdrup, King Christian, Cornwall and Graham Islands, thence to his starting point; an epic journey which even elicited from Commissioner Courtland Starnes, always sparing of his adjectives, the curt comment: "Remarkable!"

On the heels of the Force came more traders and, with them, missionaries, anxious to save the souls of the poor heathen Igluliks, adding not a little to the complications attendant upon dealing with the natives since these Stone Age savages were totally unaware of original sin and were hardly capable of assimilating the complex teachings of the Black Robes. Sometimes the results were tragic.

Years before both Doak and Clay had encountered similar difficulties when the Reverend Girling and Mr. W. H. B. Hoare had commenced their ministrations among the primitive Cogmollocks of Coronation Gulf. They had arrived on the scene at the time these natives, having become possessed of death-dealing modern rifles and unlimited ammunition, were raising havoc with the caribou. At last there came a day when the Cogmollocks waited in vain at the ancient crossings for the caribou migration. Perplexed, their broad faces lost their customary smiles. Never within the memory of living man had the caribou failed to put in an appearance. Perhaps they had broken some taboo! Promptly they sought out their local *angatkuk*. But the medicine man was angry. They had discarded him and his teachings for these new *Kablunats* and their "medicine", and the ancient gods of the Eskimos were mad. Now, in her anger, Nulialuk, the

underwater goddess, had sent this misfortune upon them. "Tell those white dogs," he suggested naïvely, "to make their own magic. Tell them," he added with a crafty smile, "to do as I did in the past—to project their astral bodies through the ether and tell the caribou to come along."

In vain the missionaries explained to the irate Huskies they were men of God and not magicians. True, they *had* told the Eskimos of a land where caribou would always be found aplenty, but that was in the Happy Hunting Grounds—when they were dead. But those hungry Huskies were materialists; they wanted their meat *now* and not hereafter. When the caribou had been tardy in coming in the past they reminded the now frightened missionaries their medicine men had gone into a trance, ordered the caribou to hurry—and they came! Now it was up to the missionaries. If they'd lied to the Huskies, and couldn't bring the caribou, well—it was going to be just too bad for them. They would choke them with a rawhide line next morning, as they did with their own impostors.

Word reached the barracks. That night, as polar bear-gut drums throbbed ominously among the tupeks as a prelude to the demise of the two missionaries, the Police boat slipped quietly over to the Mission, the two men were smuggled aboard and spirited along the Arctic coast to the safety of Stapleton Bay.

Now, with the opening up of Baffin Land, and the arrival of missionaries, the Eskimos were caught in a wave of spiritual excitement. When the Black Coats had departed, Neuktuk, headman at the village of Keveetukmuit, found himself in possession of a bible which he was, of course, unable to read. Nevertheless he'd been assured that within its pages lay the secret that would for ever banish starvation, poor fur hunts and low fur prices from the igloos of his tribe. If only he could understand that writing! At last he prevailed upon a friend to pound him over the head a few times with a stick in order that he might obtain the light of understanding.

The result was extraordinary. Immediately Neuktuk saw the Light. He was, he explained, Almighty God himself, and carried a special message for his people. The first message, a leaden one from his rifle, he delivered to his mother-in-law, who promptly departed for a place where depressions and economic upheavals were unknown. In the role of saviour he next shot his father. Then Munyeuk, a blind man filled with religious zeal, came to him, saying: "I want some wind inside me so that I can

go up to Jesus." Since Munyeuk was "full of God's spirit" and, later on, might be mad and lose that spirit Neuktuk decided the time was ripe to unfold the heavenly regions to him. So Kautak and Kedluk, two of Neuktuk's apostles, were appointed to stab the poor old fellow to death. Next Lemik, unable to read or write because he was "bad inside", suddenly became inspired with the ability to scribble, a sure sign that he was too full of virtue to encumber this sinful earth. So he, too, was removed with the blood-stained snow-knives of Kautak and Kedluk.

By this time the natives had come to doubt the advantages of the white man's religion, as interpreted by Neuktuk and his bible. Not wishing to be "delivered" so suddenly and peremptorily from their earthly cares they decided to "save" Neuktuk instead. And when he refused to name the route by which he would prefer to attain the heavenly bliss that awaited him in the realms above he was shot by an Eskimo named Kidlappik and his remains prodded through a hole in the sea-ice with the handles of harpoons.

It remained, of course, for the Police to straighten out these religious complications. With two Eskimos and dog-teams Constables McInnes and MacGregor set out from Pangnirtung for Keveetukmuit, where they took down the statements of witnesses, issued warnings against further religious excesses, and returned, after an arduous trip of over five hundred miles.

It fell to the lot of McInnes to come across still another case of religious hysteria amongst the simple Eskimos which, this time, owed its inception to the appointment of an Eskimo named Miller by a travelling missionary to act as a sort of encumbent amongst the natives of Leaf River. Having diligently perused the pages of his bible it occurred to him that he was now qualified to become a full-fledged representative of the cloth. Making himself an imitation stole, surplice and wooden cross, he presented his congregation with home-made flags and ordered them to sew patches on their clothing in compliance with a "Mosaic injunction to the children of Israel". His next move was to parade his congregation about the igloos and the huts of the whites, bellowing hymns at the tops of their voices, circling the buildings and mysteriously tapping with a stick the komatiks of incoming Eskimos and whites, thereby creating not a little alarm.

Fortunately Constable McInnes' arrival occurred before the half-demented Miller had developed homicidal tendencies and he was brought to an abrupt realization that his missionary days

were over when he was hauled unceremoniously into the Mounted Police detachment at Fort Chimo.

While Staff-Sergeant Joy and his fur-clad colleagues had been pushing the scarlet tentacles of the Force into the very heart of the Polar regions those in the Western Arctic had been slowly but surely tightening their grip on that sterile region and pushing their diminutive red-roofed barracks eastward across the North-West Passage. At last there arose at Cambridge Bay still another puny barracks, dominating Victoria Land—that vast, barren, mist-enshrouded land of rock, tundra and grassy moors which had, for unknown centuries, been the summer fawning grounds of the migratory caribou until the barrage from Eskimo rifles and the indiscriminate slaughter had caused them to forsake for ever this dangerous ground for the comparative safety of the central Barrens.

To knit together these far-flung detachments Sergeant-Major Caulkin, who had succeeded Inspector Stuart T. Wood to the charge of the Western Arctic sub-District, initiated the famed “Huskie Express”. In many respects this “pony express” of the Arctic resembled the post-to-post dog-team packet maintained by the Hudson’s Bay Company along the two thousand mile reaches of the Athabasca and Mackenzie rivers from Fort McMurray to Fort McPherson. It had, however, the added advantage of combining a winter packet with an adequate patrol and man-to-man communication along the thousand mile stretch of Arctic coast from Herschel Island to Cambridge Bay.

The fall of 1928 saw a new innovation in the Western Arctic; the thin edge of the wedge that was, ere long, to speed up and completely revolutionize communication between the northern outposts and the Outside. In September of that year the staunch, two hundred ton power schooner, *St. Roche*—the Mounted Police “Navy” as the boys jocularly dubbed her—ground her way through the young ice and, with Sergeant F. Anderton in charge, made her way across the Beaufort Sea to occupy her first winter quarters at Langton Bay. Equipped with wireless and a competent operator it would keep these isolated detachments in close touch with headquarters, and fill a long-felt want as a summer patrol vessel. Not only that, it would be useful for transporting supplies and men from place to place.

Already the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals had established wireless stations at Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Aklavik and other points, while plans were afoot to extend the

service along the Arctic coast to a point in the vicinity of the Coppermine. Slowly but surely the age-old barriers and isolation of the North were succumbing before the persistent and combined assaults of traders, Mounted Police and wireless men.

Thus, since the days when the rumours of gold in the Klondyke had sent the North West Mounted Police from the haunts of the recently-tamed Crees and Blackfeet into the snow-covered forests of the Yukon the thin red line had pushed slowly, but resolutely, from the rolling prairies to the Arctic archipelago until their northernmost post now arose within a scant few hundred miles of the very Pole itself.

Quietly, unostentatiously, the scarlet-coated knights of the tundra had won their way into the hearts of the most savage and primitive Stone Age tribes upon the continent, thanks to the indomitable character and persistent good-humour in the face of overwhelming odds of such dauntless men as Doak, Clay, Staff-Sergeant Anderson and others too numerous to mention. Peace, it seemed, had been brought at last to the igloos of Stone Age savages from lonely Herschel to the uttermost peak of Baffin Island, and law and order to every picketed fort and settlement from the prairies to the Polar Sea.

Suddenly, and without the slightest warning, there exploded a bombshell that rocked the Force as nothing had done since the days when Almighty Voice had run amok and, with a couple of Cree braves, inflicted upon the Mounted Police the greatest humiliation suffered in their long and creditable history.

CHAPTER XXVII
THE MAD TRAPPER OF RAT RIVER

It was July, 1931, and Fort McPherson lay somnolent and languid under the tropic heat of the short Arctic summer, the balmy air pulsating with the drowsy drone of myriads of mosquitoes and the distant booming of a Louchoux tom-tom. From a gramophone in one of the Eskimo schooners riding on the glinting surface of the Peel at the foot of the yellow cutbank came the blatant strains of "How Are You Going To Keep 'Em Down On The Farm". Even the distant mountains that formed the divide between the many-channelled delta of the Mackenzie and the rugged, box-like canyons of the Yukon were softened by the crinkly heat-haze into delicate shades of pink and mauve and purple.

Squatted on the floor of the trading store, redolent with the musky odour of musquash skins, were a number of belated Louchoux waiting their turn to barter their lynx and bear skins with beetle-browed William Firth, the factor. His stiff-brimmed Stetson pushed back on his head, Constable "Spike" E. Millen, attired in khaki serge, leaned on the unpainted counter, chatting with the grey-bearded veteran, old man Firth, and cursing the luck that had transferred him from Cambridge Bay in the land of the Cogmollocks to the uneventful daily round at Arctic Red River, a few miles to the southward.

Not a soul around that little trading post had the faintest inkling that but a short distance to the westward there was being enacted the first of a series of incidents that were soon to lead to a dramatic climax and hold, spellbound, not only the Northland but the entire Outside world as well.

Neither did the three Louchoux bucks whose coppery faces peered through the thickly-matted willows a half day's journey to the westward realize that the lone occupant of the flimsy raft that had just swung round a bend of the serpentine Peel was going to have any particular influence on their lives.

With photographic detail their sharp black eyes observed that the man was wiry, slightly stooped shouldered, had light brown hair and a slightly upturned nose, and that he handled his flimsy

craft like a veteran trapper. Suddenly his ice-blue eyes encountered the dark visages of the redmen.

"Hey! mahogany-face," came the surly demand, "is this the Porcupine River?" No friendly smile lighted the predatory face of the stranger as his arrogant question floated across the water.

For a moment the Louchoux regarded him in disapproving silence. The Louchoux were a proud race still, and, unlike the miserable tribes up-river, had not yet been beaten down by the intruding paleface. "No!" snapped Indian Joe, curtly. "Him Peel Ribber—him *not* Porcupine."

"*Hell!*" snarled the stranger, and with an angry thrust of his pole he sent the raft leaping towards the bend ahead.

Three pairs of inscrutable eyes watched as it vanished among the willows. Then, with guttural grunts of disapproval, the three hunters turned their moccasined feet towards the fort. But already they cherished in their hearts an Indian hatred; a silent hate that, later, was to blaze into fierce intensity.

A couple of weeks slipped by. Constable Millen gazed disconsolately through the window of his Arctic Red River barracks across the billowing mass of rank greenery at the tumble-down shacks and odoriferous fish-stages that went to make up this unattractive settlement. Above the drone of mosquitoes came the staccato exhaust of a motor and in to the muddy landing chugged an Eskimo schooner from Aklavic.

A grinning Nunatagmuit in a white dickie handed him a note. It was a confidential memo from Inspector A. N. Eames who had recently assumed charge of the Western Arctic sub-District, and was dated Aklavic, July 12th.

"It is reported," he read, "that a strange man, going by the name of Johnson, landed near Fort McPherson on July 9th. Apparently he came down-river on a raft of two or three logs, tying up below the settlement and walking in to the post. . . . He had neither outfit, rifle nor dogs, but appeared to be amply supplied with money. . . . Please make inquiries in the district and submit a report, but do not make a special patrol."

So the moccasin telegraph had already carried word of this bush trapper to headquarters at Aklavic! Spike slipped the letter into the pocket of his khaki tunic and, after a few words with the Huskies, strode past the Northern Traders' post towards the barracks.

Of course he had heard of this man Johnson. Who hadn't? Word travels swiftly through the bush, and already reports of the

strange actions of this man had swept from one Louchoux encampment to another. White trappers, too, were having plenty to say about him since, on two occasions, men quietly paddling their canoes along the Peel had been confronted by the stranger at his camp in a clump of spruce a few miles above Fort McPherson and brusquely ordered to "hit the trail an' keep ago'in'!" The warning being spat at them with snake-like venom and emphasized with the blue muzzle of a revolver brandished in their faces. "He's bushed!" was the inevitable conclusion. "Been in the North too long."

A hurried visit to Fort McPherson elicited the information that Albert Johnson carried a large sum of money in big bills tucked away in small tight rolls in every pocket. Though surly to a degree, and angrily resenting any questions concerning himself, he had given no trouble. "He comes in and gets what he wants," William Firth told Millen, "pays for it and bothers no one. Says he wasn't staying in the district so we didn't need to know all about him."

Anxious to size up this Johnson for himself Millen at last succeeded in crossing his trail. The meeting occurred at Fort McPherson as Johnson was packing supplies down to his canoe.

"Good-day!" Spike greeted him affably and stopped. "What's your name?" he asked, his voice friendly and unconcerned. "Don't seem to have seen your face 'round here before."

"Albert Johnson," came the surly answer. "Who in hell wants to know?"

"Where do you come from?"

"Arctic Red River!"

Millen eyed the so-called Johnson keenly. "You certainly don't come from Arctic Red River," he stated bluntly. "That's my detachment—and I know everyone in the district." His eyes bored challengingly into the other's. "Where are you from?" he reiterated quietly.

"Came down the Mackenzie from the prairie country," Johnson growled with obvious impatience.

Again the man had lied. For a second time Millen met that defiant, icy stare. "And—where are you bound for?" he demanded.

"None of your damned business!" Johnson spat viciously. "I don't want nothin' to do with the Police. There's allus trouble when they're around." Turning contemptuously on his moc-

casined heel he strode down the sandy trail towards the willow flats.

Standing there, tall and erect, on the brink of the precipitous bank Constable Millen watched the retreating form with a peculiar sense of foreboding. "I'm afraid," he told William Firth when he re-entered the store a little later, "that bird's going to give us trouble yet." A remark that was to be vividly recalled a few months later.

Once again winter clamped down on the Northland, freezing solid the creeks and pools and the many-channelled delta of the Mackenzie and burying the frosted willows deep in driven snow. Louchoux hunters commenced to follow the fur trail on their webbed snowshoes, setting traps and dead-falls. Dog-teams shuttled back and forth with jingling bells between Arctic Red River, McPherson and Aklavic. Fur-clad Mounties, urging their slant-eyed dogs along the forest trails, had almost forgotten the bush trapper who, for a while, had made himself obnoxious along the winding Peel.

The short, dark December days slipped swiftly by till Indians and Eskimos commenced to drive their dog-teams in to the posts to join the whites in celebrating the festive season in traditional Northern style.

Christmas Day found the genial and popular Spike Millen and Constable King the centre of a boisterous group of parki-clad traders and trappers in the snug log barracks at Arctic Red River. The morning had seen a constant stream of coppery humanity on fast-speeding dog-teams visiting around from Indian cabins to Mission, post and barracks for the customary hand-out of sweetened tea, tobacco, roasted caribou meat and soggy doughnuts. As evening closed down, and the redmen returned to their own lodge fires, the celebration at the barracks took a more riotous and noisy turn. Glass and bottle passed freely from hand to hand, loosening both tongues and memories till the walls resounded to the laughter and uproar, drowning out the friendly crackling of the red-hot stove and the howling of the piercing wind without which hurled clouds of snow against the thickly-frosted windows.

Suddenly the door swung open, admitting a billowing cloud of white vapour which almost obscured the hooded figure with frost-scarred face and whitened eyebrows. "Hello, Joe!" came the booming welcome as they recognized the Indian. Despite his outward appearance of stolid calm it became immediately obvious that the native was excited.

"What's the trouble, Joe?" Millen asked as he handed him a pannikin of steaming tea.

The Louchoux's face creased into lines of anger. "Dat white man," he snarled malevolently, "him come from Yukon last summer. Now him break it all my dead-falls . . . pull'um up my traps an' hang 'em up in tree. Him say *him* trap-line, Injun no trap dere!" In quick, excited gutturals the Indian poured out his story. A strange white man occupying a cabin on the Rat River had been terrorizing the Indians until they were afraid to hunt or trap. Now they were starving; with no furs with which to buy supplies and ammunition.

Millen turned to Constable King. "That bird Johnson again," he growled as he gazed through the frosted panes at the blizzard that howled without. "Hate like hell to ask you to buck weather like this, but there's only one thing for it. Check up on this bird and see if he's got a trapping licence. If he hasn't he's no business trapping here at all. Guess you'll have to hit it with Joe Bernard in the morning."

King nodded. "O.K., Spike. I'll get some bannock cooked up right away."

Late on the bitterly cold winter night of the 28th Constable King and Joe Bernard trudged through a spume of snow and halted their dog-team before the Johnson cabin. Squat, ugly and forbidding, built of unusually heavy logs, which had been loop-holed at the corners, it stood in a snow-filled clearing on the north bank of the Rat, twenty miles from its junction with the Husky, and resembled an old-time frontier fort or block-house rather than a trapper's cabin.

"Some shack!" muttered King as he pounded with mittened fist upon the massive door. "Hey—open up!" he shouted, his words whipped from his lips by the knife-edged wind. Only dull echoes answered his summons. Ploughing around the cabin on his snowshoes King observed that there were no tracks in the freshly-fallen snow to indicate that the trapper had left the place since the storm commenced. Again he pounded the door. "Open up!" he shouted. "I know you're in there." There was no response.

King shrugged his shoulders. "Guess we'll have to hit it over to Aklavic," he told Bernard. "Can't do anything more without a warrant. Damn it," he growled, "an extra hundred and twenty miles of slogging just because this bird refuses to open up." With mounting anger he pounded on the door till it leapt and rever-

berated beneath his blows. Finally he picked up the head-line of his toboggan. "Come on," he snapped, "might as well get going."

In the noon twilight of New Year's Eve the Police party appeared again before the cabin on the Rat. This time it comprised Constable King, Constable R. C. McDowell, formerly a driver of the famed "Huskie Express" along the coast, and Lazarus Sitchinilli,¹ one of the Louchoux head-men. All were armed with rifles and sidearms while, in the pocket of his furred ahtegi, King carried a warrant empowering him to enter and search the trapper's dwelling. With McDowell beside him King pounded on the door. Silence! "Open in the name of the King!" came the command. No answer. "Open—or we'll smash the door in." King lifted an axe above his head.

Bang! Thunderous reverberations within the cabin accompanied the spiteful crack of the rifle. Splinters leapt outward as a bullet ripped through the door, sending King reeling, his body pierced by the leaden ball. Whipping his revolver out McDowell poured a stream of fire through a loop-hole to draw attention from King as he crawled painfully towards the bush, leaving ominous stains upon the snow. With blazing guns pouring a shower of lead from the cabin's loop-holes Sitchinilli crawled to where King lay stunned and bleeding.

Braving the flaming guns McDowell² rushed to the side of his stricken comrade to find a growing stain on his parki from a bullet hole beneath the heart. For a second he stood horrified at the realization that eighty miles of the hardest slogging lay between his dangerously wounded companion and the nearest doctor at Aklavic—and the dogs dead tired. Defying again the rifle of the madman in the cabin, expecting each second to feel the bite of hot lead, he slung King over his shoulder and carried him to the safety of the river bank. There he did what he could for the wounded man, lashed him on the sled, picked up his whip and urged the dogs towards Aklavic.

¹ Lazarus Sitchinilli was one of the writer's Louchoux guides when he crossed the Rocky Mountains by dog-team from Aklavic to Fort Yukon and Fairbanks in the winter of 1924. A lithe and active man, always smiling and good-natured, Lazarus was one of the most efficient Indians I have ever had the good fortune to travel with.—P.H.G.

² In June, 1938, Lance-Corporal R. C. McDowell, after spending seven of his eleven years with the Force in the Arctic, was stationed at Canada House, London, England. Before leaving for England McDowell visited the author's home in Winnipeg and described the experiences herein set down.—P.H.G.

McDowell had already won renown for his fleetness of foot and the speed with which he handled the "Huskie Express" along the coast. Now, if ever, his endurance was to be submitted to the acid test. Sparing neither his dogs nor himself he urged them through the biting cold and billowing drifts, trudging tirelessly behind, pausing occasionally to minister to his wounded and unconscious comrade. Night clamped down with bitter intensity. Enfolded in the cloak of purple darkness, with the stars winking coldly through the tops of grotesque, contorted pines, he mushed resolutely on to the crunch, crunch of his snowshoes, the protesting squeal of the toboggan and the occasional groan of the man upon the sled. On leaden-wings the dreary hours passed monotonously by as he slogged grimly through a spectral world where Time appeared to have ceased. Only by the swing of the scintillating dipper in the ebony bowl above did he realize at last that dawn was nearing.

Twenty hours after his departure from the mad trapper's cabin he drove up to the Mission hospital at Aklavic and delivered King to the care of Doctor Urquhart, the record journey having been made without a single stop to make a fire and with dogs that were thoroughly exhausted even at the outset.

Aklavic, diminutive metropolis of the Arctic, was thrown into a turmoil when news of the vicious shooting got around. Parki-clad men rushed to the barracks, rifle in hand, to offer help. To Inspector Eames the situation now stood out in all its stark reality. Johnson had committed a serious crime—a crime that was a direct challenge not only to himself but to the authority of the entire Force.

Eames snatched up the gauntlet promptly. Through the frigid ether crackled a call from UZK, "The Voice of the Northern Lights", calling all trappers throughout the delta to join the Police in hunting down the mad dog Johnson. Improvised by Quartermaster-Sergeant Riddell and the men of the Royal Canadian Signal Corps for the entertainment of lonely trappers, this amateur broadcasting station was now to serve a vastly different purpose.

Mounted Police from Arctic Red River and Fort McPherson were ordered in to Aklavic for duty. Ere long Inspector Eames surveyed his determined and granite-faced posse, a picturesque assemblage in their decorated snow-shirts, furred ahtegis and gaudy Eskimo mukluks. It comprised Constables Millen and McDowell, a couple of dark-visaged Louchoux guides, and trap-

pers Noel Verville, Knud Lang, Karl Garlund and Ernest Sutherland.

Their wolverine-trimmed hoods pulled over their heads, as protection from the blizzard that whistled about their ears, the posse whipped up their huskies and fell into a long, swaying, serpentine line. Eames had secured some dynamite, intending to convert it into bombs to blast his way into the cabin, and this, with dog-feed, grub and a supply of ammunition, had been lashed upon the sleds. One thing cheered them on their way: a report from Doctor Urquhart that, unless complications developed, King would recover—thanks to Constable McDowell. The explosive bullet had smashed two ribs just below the heart, ploughed through King's body and broken two more ribs at the point of exit. Only his posture with uplifted axe had prevented the bullet from penetrating his heart!

For four gruelling, tortured days they bucked the forty below weather, intensified by the paralysing humidity of the Arctic; the swirling blizzards piling up mountainous drifts of salt-like snow before their sledges and stinging their faces like buckshot. Half-blinded, the fur-clad drivers fought with butt and lash to make the cringing huskies face the storm. At last, through a smother of driving flakes, they espied the sinister shape of the loop-holed cabin. Circling the building under cover, Eames posted his men at strategic points and shouted to Johnson to surrender.

The reply was prompt and uncompromising. From the cabin came the whip-like crack of a rifle, a spear of flame leapt from a loop-hole, sending a bullet whining above his head. From the Police guns a crackling fusillade rattled against the log walls of the cabin.

"Come, boys," shouted Eames, "we'll rush him and smash the door in."

From the rifles of the trappers burst a covering fire of steady flame as McDowell and Millen zigzagged across the clearing and brought their rifle butts smashing down upon the door. Blazing guns flared in their faces, forcing them to streak for cover with the door but partly demolished.

"I got a squint through the door!" cried the amazed Millen as he joined the posse. "The shack was full of smoke, but I saw where he'd dug away down into the ground. The place's double-walled all around. Trapper's cabin *hell*—it's a damned fortress! The only way's to dynamite him out of there."

While bombs were being prepared the posse crouched behind the snow-covered bush for protection from the blizzard that continued to moan and scream about them. Eames had decided to delay the attack till dawn, in the hope that they might catch Johnson napping.

At four o'clock everything was ready. Silent and sinister the cabin lay there, an ebony rectangle against the empurpled snow. The blizzard had subsided and stars winked coldly in a sky now lighted with the ghostly phosphorescence of the Aurora.

"All right!" Eames called softly. Rising from behind a twisted pine Verville heaved a dynamite bomb against the cabin door. A rending detonation rocked the ground and almost split their ear-drums; the cabin seemed suddenly to burst into a welter of blood-red flame as though it had exploded. For a split second the clearing glowed with scarlet light which changed to ebony blackness as the posse leapt with flaming guns towards the cabin.

Lurching to the shattered door Knud Lang peered through the acrid smoke that eddied and swirled within. Half-conscious from the tremendous detonation Johnson lay sprawled inert upon the floor, his eyes staring wildly through the murk. Knud pointed his gun . . . hesitated . . . and dropped the muzzle. "Hell," his voice came clearly to the others. "I can't shoot a man with his eyes open like that!"

An automatic spat flame and bullets through the doorway. Johnson had suddenly become galvanized into life. With the rest of the posse at his heels Knud fled for his very life.

In the forbidding gloom and silence of the forest they prepared for another attack. Flares sizzled into flame, lighting the icy woods with ghostly incandescence which revealed a ragged hole blown in the cabin roof and the ridge-pole pointing crazily towards the star-spangled sky. Revolver in hand Eames and Garlund prepared for another sortie. A four pound bomb of dynamite sailed through the air and fell with nice precision squarely in the doorway.

With a shattering roar it exploded, emitting a mushroom of red and orange flame and filling the air with splintered wood. Eames and Garlund launched themselves across the clearing. Unhurt, Johnson unloosed another fusillade. Struck by a bullet, the electric torch leapt from Garlund's hand. Eames' hat shot high in the air. With bullets singing like wasps about their ears they swung aside and leapt again for the protection of the timber.

With the dynamite gone, the food and dog-feed almost exhausted, the cold becoming more intense, and the mad trapper still apparently unharmed, Eames held another council among the dark and sentinel pines.

"Let's tough it out," growled Verville. "Won't be any worse for us than it will for him in there."

"Sure," echoed Lang and Garlund. "We'll fix the mad dog yet, an' put his hide on a stretcher. Let's camp here—right on his trail and nail him first time he makes a break."

But Eames, recalling, perhaps, the tragic death of the Fitzgerald patrol but a few short miles away, and realizing the terrible consequences that might ensue if they failed to capture the cabin and renew depleted supplies, decided otherwise.

"It isn't worth the chances, boys," he warned. "We've got to hit it for Aklavic. As it is we're going to run short of grub and dog-feed."

Muttering sullenly amongst themselves, the posse turned towards the frozen river. A last look at Johnson's fortress showed them the blasted and fire-scarred wall, the gaping doorway, the shattered roof and the up-ended ridge-pole, and they could almost hear the exultant chuckles of the man within as he witnessed their retreat. It was Verville who voiced their feelings as he shook his fist at the cabin. "You win this time, guy," he bellowed, "but don't forget . . . we're coming back!"

Five days later Inspector Eames was leading another posse from Aklavic towards the fortified cabin of the mad trapper, their sleds heavily laden with rations, dog-feed, ammunition, and some stink bombs ingeniously devised by Staff-Sergeant Hersey of the Wireless Corps from outboard motor cylinders, gunpowder and sulphur. The original posse had been augmented by the addition of Quartermaster-Sergeant R. F. Riddell and Staff-Sergeant Hersey of the Royal Canadian Signal Corps at Aklavic, who carried with them a portable wireless transmitter. Riddell was a decided acquisition to the party since, apart from his technical wireless knowledge, he was an experienced traveller, dog-driver and hunter, and knew the Rat River region well. Adding their strength to the posse were the three Indians whom Johnson had treated with such scant courtesy on the Peel.

Good weather and hard-packed drifts made travelling easier and faster, and on the third day out they espied again the squat cabin they had such good reason to remember. "Well," shouted

Verville grimly as they climbed the bank, "here we are again, guy . . . watch out."

As they circled the cabin warily they noticed that its appearance had not changed and that no attempt had been made to repair either the splintered door or the shattered roof. "He's flown the coop!" snapped Garlund.

Fearful of treachery they crawled cautiously towards the wrecked shack, their numbed fingers caressing the icy triggers of their rifles. At last they reached the door and peered within. Johnson was gone! He had completely disappeared.

In stunned amazement they gazed around the cabin. The floor had been dug three feet below ground level, while the double-logged low walls had completely turned the bullets of the Police. Lying at his loop-holes, and firing at his attackers, Johnson had been practically invulnerable from rifle bullets. The cabin still reeked with the odour of gunpowder. The inside was in a state of havoc, littered with masses of debris, beans, flour and other provisions scattered by the force of the dynamite explosion. Beneath their mukluks crunched scores of empty cartridge shells.

"For God's sake look at this!" cried Hersey. Crowding forward they observed a gaping cavity in the earth in one corner of the cabin.

"A tunnel," laughed Millen thinly. "So that's why our dynamite failed to drive him out. That son-of-a-gun was sure prepared for anything."

Searching the hard-packed snow of the clearing for tracks that might indicate the direction of Johnson's flight they came across a cunningly concealed cache of food supplies two hundred yards beyond the cabin. Millen shook his head. "What kind of a trapper's this man Johnson?" he ejaculated. "Look at all the labour in digging that tunnel and dugout and double-walling the cabin. And not a trap or a pelt or a stretcher anywhere around . . . why, he wasn't trapping at all. Then he hides his main cache two hundred yards from his cabin to give himself more work. The whole thing's doggone crazy. Don't make sense."

With Johnson's flight Inspector Eames now realized the immensity of the problem which confronted the Police. The rough Rat River country, with its rugged mountains, its tangled undergrowth, its winding streams and glaciers and its snow-filled ravines gave the fugitive a tremendous advantage. And a man

of Johnson's type; a deadly shot, a superlative trailsman, wiry and fearless to the last degree, could be depended upon to utilize these advantages to the utmost. Furthermore, the constant winds that lurked and whipped about the mountains would quickly obliterate his tracks. While the "Mad Trapper" travelled light the large Police party would necessarily be burdened with heavy baggage and weighty dog-feed.

"We haven't enough grub and dog-feed," Eames decided. "Sergeant Riddell, Verville, Garlund and Constable Millen can remain here to scout around and follow up Johnson's trail—if they locate it. Hersey can establish a base camp here and keep in touch with Aklavic by radio. I'll hike back to Aklavic and find some way of keeping you fellows supplied with grub."

Leaving the five men in camp in a clump of spruce beside the Rat Eames deposited the loads, hitched up his dogs, and soon the crunch, crunch of snowshoes faded in the distance.

For Spike Millen and his party there followed days of incredible toil, prowling the river trails, floundering through the soft snow of deep ravines, searching the frost-rimed willows and bucking the piercing winds as they explored the icy summits and snow-filled canyons for the snowshoe tracks of the fugitive. But not a sign nor a track did they find of the elusive trapper. Johnson had succeeded in completely covering up his tracks.

Leg-weary and exhausted, their feet burning from the bite of frozen snowshoe thongs, they sat about their puny camp-fire near the edge of the timber-line and hazarded one guess after another.

Had Johnson crossed the divide and made for La Pierre House on the Bell River? No man, not even an Indian, would venture above timber-line in the winter if he could help it. For, about those dread summits, lurked quick and sudden death. Blizzards of unrestrained and relentless fury would burst without warning from a clear sky and howl around the jagged peaks for nine or ten days at a time. Yet the man was desperate and of unquestionable courage. Was he heading for the deep gorge of the Porcupine, intending to cross the Alaskan border into United States territory at Rampart House where the Mounties could not pursue him? There was only one thing to do—to plug ahead in the hope of eventually cutting his trail.

Eleven days out from the base camp where they had parted with Eames they drove their tired dogs past the granite-walled mouth of the Barrier River and, a few hours later, entered the mouth of a frozen creek confined between towering walls of rock.

Fighting the dangerous overflow they explored the banks for signs and scanned the mauve mountain-tops that soared above them, the crests silhouetted against the smoky redness of a sun that still continued to lurk below the horizon.

"A tough place to run into Johnson," vouchsafed Verville, his grey eyes noting apprehensively the countless jagged rocks which offered ideal concealment for a lurking foe. "We'd sure make one lovely target against the white snow of this creek bed."

At last the redness departed from the sky, leaving a tinge of violet that, in a couple of hours, would be transformed into ebony darkness. Crawling out of the canyon they commenced to portage a sweeping bend. Suddenly Garlund dropped on his knees and uttered a hoarse exclamation. Quivering with excitement he pointed ahead. "Look!" he cried. "He's there."

Crouching behind a V-shaped barricade in a clump of spruce that rose from the high bank of the frozen creek some four hundred yards across the frozen niggerhead was the dark but unmistakable figure of a man.

CHAPTER XXVIII
THE END OF THE TRAIL

"THAT'S him all right!" Riddell scanned the distant figure for a few minutes through his glasses. "And . . . we've got the edge on him. He hasn't seen us. What do you say? It's getting dark now. Shall we wait and tackle him in the morning?"

Crouched behind the snow-swept hog-back, their eyes glued on the distant figure, they made their plans in hoarse whispers. They would retreat to the cover of the creek behind them, camp for the night and tackle the mad trapper in the morning. As they crunched on their snowshoes through the violet darkness of the canyon Riddell chuckled softly. "Our luck was sure with us this time," he exclaimed. "He'd have had us cold if we'd followed up this creek and hadn't decided to make that traverse. Must be wise we're on his trail. Figured on getting us by surprise as we came up that creek-bed. A perfect ambush," he added with grudging admiration. "That Johnson's sure no fool."

As soon as the unseen sun painted the peaks with lavender and scarlet they were on the trail again. Climbing to the hog-back they crawled carefully from one bunch of frost-rimed willows to another, stalking the man behind the barricade. They were still three hundred yards from Johnson's ambush when the dark figure rose upright, plainly silhouetted against the blue-white drifts of snow.

Swinging his rifle to his shoulder Garlund took swift aim and pressed the trigger. A deafening detonation rolled back and forth among the peaks as Johnson threw up his arms and toppled backwards behind the breastwork. Leaping down the slope they threw themselves behind some rocks and bushes some distance from the creek. Not a sign came from the ambush.

"Think you got him?" panted Millen.

The trapper snuggled down behind the rock beside him and nodded. "Believe I did, Spike. It was a chance shot though. He may be playing possum."

Sergeant Riddell agreed. "Better lie low for a while," he

advised. "Not worth taking any chances. That man's desperate, and when he shoots he shoots to kill."

Crouching in the biting cold behind the rocks and willows the posse watched the barricade with hawk-like vigilance. Two frigid hours crawled by without a sign of life or movement, the cold biting with numbing intensity deeper and deeper into their vitals. At last Millen turned to Riddell, his face blue with cold. "What do you say—shall we risk it?"

"All right," snapped Riddell. "But advance in open order, dash from rock to rock, and don't expose yourselves."

Their faces grim and determined, Millen, Verville and Garlund nodded.

"O.K., let's go."

Zigzagging from rock to rock they reached the bank and slid in a smother of snow into the creek bed. Twenty-five yards ahead, behind the frozen willows that fringed the further bank, lay the desperado's barricade. With Millen beside him, Riddell clawed his way up the precipitous bank. As his forehead rose above the rim a menacing figure shot like a jack-in-a-box above the breast-work. Crash! Splinters leapt from a tree beside the Sergeant's head.

"Jump!" he roared, sprawling down the bank in a shower of stones beyond range of the murderous rifle. Two swift shots followed in quick succession and then . . . a sinister silence.

Where was Millen? With fear clutching his heart Riddell climbed the bank, defying Johnson's rifle. Suddenly he emitted a gasp of horror. Inert upon the snow lay the outstretched body of Spike Millen, his parki torn and bloodstained. Ignoring the blood-crazed trapper he seized the body and dragged it to the ice. One glance was enough. Spike Millen was dead—shot clean through the heart!

"Is he . . . is he . . . ?" Verville's dry tongue refused to voice his fears.

"Dead!" answered the Sergeant grimly as he laid the body tenderly on the snow, his face cold as granite and lined with bitter hate. "We'll get that *son of a bitch* yet or die in the attempt!"

Stunned by the sudden and overwhelming tragedy they sat disconsolately in the snow behind the protection of some rocks.

"What'll we do now?" asked Garlund, his voice husky as he regarded with misty eyes the inanimate form of their murdered comrade.

"There's only *one* thing to do," rasped Riddell with determination. "Stay right here and dog the heels of that rat across the creek . . . but keep out of range of his rifle. It would be suicide to attempt to rush that barricade. He could hold off a bloody army up on that bank there. I'll hike for Aklavic, report Millen's death, arrange for more supplies and ammunition, and send Hersey up from the base camp. This chase's just begun."

Not since the murder of Bill Doak had the Northland been aroused as it was when Sergeant Riddell drove in to Aklavic with news of Millen's murder. Nowhere along the Arctic coast had there been a more popular policeman than Spike, or Newt, Millen, as he was known, whose good-nature, fearlessness and courage had become a byword from Fort McPherson to the ice-girt shores of King William's Land. A wave of flaming anger swept that little settlement near the fringe of the Polar Sea. Again UZK broadcasted Inspector Eames' appeal for still more trappers and Indians to join the man-hunt; while the moccasin telegraph, the radio's prehistoric cousin, carried word to the oval lodges of the Louchoux and the squat cabins of the trappers. "Get the mad trapper of Rat River!" became the slogan of the North. From all directions grim-faced men in fur-trimmed parkis hit the trail behind their flying dog-teams for Aklavic.

Into newspapers, whose editorial staffs were unfamiliar with the incredibly difficult conditions that faced the Force in trailing this lone desperado, crept an attitude of cynical criticism. But from the outset Eames had been faced with the one enormous handicap the North had yet to overcome—the difficulty of transporting bulky supplies of dog-feed and provisions long distances where there were no trails and the snow lay soft and heavy. On one of the regular trails where dog-feed could be renewed at Indian camps along the line of travel it would have been a totally different story.

Casting about in his mind for some means of conquering this apparently insurmountable obstacle Eames had a sudden flash of inspiration. Why not have an aeroplane sent in from Edmonton? Not only would it assure ample supplies for the posse without these long, heart-breaking marches to and fro over snow-swept mountain and tundra, but it would also permit both men and dogs to conserve their strength for a final dash to run this Johnson down. Again, if rifle fire failed to dislodge him from his stronghold it might be possible to bomb him from the air. So far the Force had not become air-minded since Northern flying was still

in its experimental stage. Still it seemed to be the only solution to the problem. His mind made up, Eames sent his request crackling southward through the ether.

On Tuesday, February 2nd, 1932, Captain "Wop" May received from "Punch" Dickens, Superintendent of the Canadian Airways at Edmonton, a wire requesting him to fly to Aklavic and join in the Police hunt for Johnson. Dickens would fly to Fort McMurray with a Mounted Police officer and a supply of tear-gas bombs and transfer them to "Wop" May's plane before he left.

Next morning Punch Dickens swooped down on to the frozen Clearwater at Fort McMurray and transferred supplies, bombs, and Constable Carter, who was replacing the unfortunate Millen, to the waiting plane. The genial Wop May crawled aboard, gave her the gun, and soon the plane was soaring down the Athabasca on her fifteen hundred mile flight through the thirty-five below weather to Aklavic.

Zooming low in the shelter of the Athabasca's fir-fringed banks, they roared northward till a blinding snow-storm grounded them at Fort Smith for the night.

Next day they were roaring north again, ploughing blindly through a howling blizzard, the earth beneath them completely blotted out. Dogged by bad weather they reached Arctic Red River on Saturday the 5th and received word to meet Eames' posse at the junction of the Rat River and the Peel. But though Wop circled the region not a living soul moved anywhere in that world of whiteness below him. Swinging the Bellanca round he headed for Aklavic.

They awakened next morning to find Aklavic in the grip of another Arctic blizzard, and the Bellanca buried deep beneath a mountainous drift of snow. At noon there came a rift in the scudding clouds, and the storm showed signs of abating. Armed with snow-shovels Indians and Huskies went to work with a will and dug the plane from its dazzling winding sheet. Then, with Doctor Urquhart aboard, Wop zoomed into the frigid ether to resume his search for the patrol. Not a sign of life did they see as they soared on through the snow flurries. Below them they sighted the V-shaped junction of the Barrier and the Rat. Still not a living soul. The plane roared on. Suddenly Jack Bowen, the mechanic, gripped Wop's arm and pointed. Far below four diminutive figures, spread out on the snow, were creeping towards a clump of spruce.

Swooping down, Wop tried in vain to spot the fugitive, but

no other living being was to be seen. As the men stood up and signalled, May picked up his glasses and espied a single snowshoe trail, badly drifted but showing up here and there on the wind-swept drifts. Dropping lower, they followed the trail for five miles up the Barrier to find that the fugitive had doubled back on his tracks and swung from the river across a rock-ribbed ridge into a snow-filled valley where the tracks struck westward towards the rugged range of mountains that separated the Mackenzie from the Yukon. There it petered out completely.

Zooming back to the Police camp May dropped off Constable Carter and learned that a storm had prevented Inspector Eames from meeting him at the mouth of the Rat on time.

"Better keep a close watch for that bird Johnson," May warned the posse. "He's formed a habit of back-tracking over his trail. You're liable to run smack into him when you least expect to. And—if you do, someone's going to be cold turkey."

Next day, after an unsuccessful scouting trip, May dropped down at the Police camp, picked up the frozen body of Constable Millen and flew it back to Aklavic.

Through the bitterly cold and boisterous weather peculiar to this mountainous region the search continued unabated, the Bellanca shuttling backwards and forwards, scouting ahead, and relaying supplies and dog-feed. On February 10th traces of Johnson's trail were discovered farther up towards the mountains, with evidence that he was weakening.

"He's headed for the Yukon," Eames told Wop May a couple of days later. "I've wirelessly Anchorage, Alaska, to get word through to Constable May at Old Crow, warning him to be on the look out in case Johnson gets across the divide. I'm thinking of withdrawing some of my men," he added. "It's too great a strain keeping them supplied with grub and dog-feed. Suppose you and Riddell take another scout across the divide, flying as low as possible."

In a smother of snow the Bellanca roared off again and headed towards the saw-toothed summit. Hardly had the plane disappeared from sight ere the crunch, crunch of snowshoes, caused everyone to tauten and grasp their weapons. Into the camp strode three strangers in furred parkis and mukluks. It was Constable May from Old Crow, accompanied by a huge grey-haired giant—Frank Jackson—who had traded at La Pierre House for many years and knew the mountains better than any living white man, and Frank Hogg, another trapper. All were

heavily armed, but not one of them had seen a sign of Johnson.

Suddenly there echoed on the frigid air the sharp crack of a dog-whip and the frightened yelps of huskies. Into the camp careened Peter Alexi, a Kutchin Indian from La Pierre House, flogging his dogs as though the devil was at his heels.

"Johnson—him cross'um mount'ins!" came the guttural cry of the Indian before the team had properly halted. "Injuns . . . dey see 'im tracks on Bell Ribber two days 'go." All pressed around the excited Kutchin. "Injuns all plenty scare," added the redman breathlessly. "All leabe it dere traps an' come in to de post." A hunting party, he added, had passed the place where Johnson's tracks were seen and had almost run upon him.

"That's our man—not a doubt of it!" exclaimed Eames with conviction. "He's made-it across the divide. Now he's heading for Alaska." A momentary flash of admiration appeared in his anxious eyes. "He's sure *some* traveller. Ninety miles in three days—without dogs, and through continuous blizzards. But now I think we've got him cornered."

He turned to Hersey. "Better take Constable May, Hogg, Ethier and Jackson along with Peter Alexi here, and these two Indians," he ordered, "and make the passage through the mountains. I'll fly across along with Riddell and Garlund and follow Johnson's trail before another blizzard drifts it over."

Sorting out the supplies required for the toilsome and dangerous trip the ground party pulled out with Alexi crunching in the lead. Meanwhile the Bellanca returned and soared off to Aklavic to bring further rations and dog-feed.

Next morning the air party hopped off for the ancient trading post of La Pierre House. Bad flying conditions made the crossing of the eight thousand foot range of jagged mountain peaks hazardous in the extreme. Hitting the wrong pass in their first attempt they remedied their error and descended in a smother of snow on the other side of the divide.

Setting out from La Pierre House a ground party returned with the disappointing report that while they had unquestionably come on Johnson's tracks—they were at least four days old. That meant that Johnson must still be at least a hundred miles ahead of his pursuers. Incredible as it seemed, this remarkable man was making record time despite his exhausted and emaciated condition and the terrible and exacting state of the trail. Johnson was not a man but a machine.

Soaring into the sky next morning Wop May picked up the

snowshoe tracks beyond La Pierre House and followed them round the looping bends of the icy Bell River for nearly thirty miles till they swung into the mouth of the Eagle River only to be completely obliterated. Thousands upon thousands of caribou had beaten a hard-packed trail on the river bottom and, taking advantage of this, Johnson had shed his snowshoes and trudged in their frozen tracks. But May had already observed a short cut the posse could make to the mouth of the Eagle and thus gain three days on their quarry.

Led by Alexi the posse staggered in to La Pierre House at midnight, men and dogs completely worn out by their battle with deep snow, lashing gales and the fierce cold of the mountains. Too tired to eat, they threw themselves into their sleeping-bags and sank into the oblivion of complete and utter exhaustion.

Next morning a frigid wind from the north lashed the snow against the panes of the post like birdshot. Again they hit the trail, only to be held up the following day by another of those howling blizzards which seemed to haunt these mountains.

Wednesday the 17th dawned grey and forbidding in a smother of snow and mist. Towards noon the fog lifted and Wop May and Bowen soared off northward for Eagle River. Soon they were snoring along at a hundred and twenty miles an hour, scrutinizing the rugged country and the white network of creeks and lakes below. Suddenly May stiffened. Far below he discerned a black object on the ice in the centre of the frozen stream. Four hundred yards south of that he observed half a dozen other specks spread out at the foot of the eastern cutbank. A movement near the opposite bank directed his gaze to two more dark figures silhouetted clearly against the dead-white of the snow.

From the east bank leapt a spear of orange flame, accompanied by a detonation. With a fierce thrill he realized the significance of the scene. That lone black speck in the centre of the river was Johnson—the mad trapper. The other black specks were the posse, crouched along the river bank for cover. And that orange flash was the flash of a rifle! “They’re fighting!” yelled Bowen. “They’re closing in on Johnson!” To the spiteful crack of Johnson’s rifle, and the rattle of answering gunfire, May opened the throttle and zoomed in a wide circle above the icy battleground.

“We came roaring down the river,” he said, “and once again I peered down at Johnson in his snow trench. Then, as I swept over the posse, I saw a figure lying on a bed-roll near the west

bank and realized with a sick feeling that one of our party had been hit.

"I circled back up-river, passing over the posse and Johnson. As I flew over the fugitive's lair it seemed as though he was lying in an unnatural position. Swinging back I nosed the Bellanca down till our skids were tickling the snow. Johnson, I could plainly see as I flashed past, was lying face-down in the snow, his right arm outflung, grasping his rifle. And I knew as I looked that he was dead. The Mounted Police had got their man. The chase was over.

"I rocked the Bellanca back and forth to signal Johnson's death, then landed on the river bottom and taxied over to where I'd seen the man lying on his bed-roll. 'Who's hit?' I called out as Jack and I leapt from the machine. Sergeant Riddell was bending over the wounded man. 'Sergeant Hersey,' he said.

"'Badly?' I asked.

"'I'm afraid so!' Riddell's face was grave. 'He's wounded in the left knee, and the bullet may have gone up in his stomach.'

"'Get him fixed up,' I said, 'and I'll fly him to Aklavic.'

"While Sergeant Riddell was fixing Hersey up I strolled towards Johnson's lair where the posse were gathering, staring at the dead man. As I joined the crowd Verville turned to me. 'Just look at that face, Wop,' he said, 'did you ever see anything like it?' The man was lying face-down on the river, and as I stooped over and saw him I got the worst shock I've ever had.

"For Johnson's lips were circled back from his teeth in the most terrible sneer I've ever seen on a man's face. The parchment-like skin over his cheek-bones was distorted by it; and his teeth glistened like an animal's through his days-old bristle of beard. It was the most awful grimace of hate I'll ever see—the hard-boiled bitter hate of a man who knows he's trapped at last and has determined to take as many enemies as he can with him down that trail he knows he's going to hit. After that sneer I couldn't feel sorry for this man who lay dead in front of me. Instead I was glad that he was dead. The world seemed a better and cleaner place without him.

"Returning to the Bellanca we got Hersey in. He wasn't bleeding very much, and was fully conscious. Safely away, we got to Aklavic hospital in fifty minutes, where Doctor Urquhart cut his parki off him. Johnson's bullet had struck him in the left elbow, ploughed through his left knee, drilled his arm near the armpit then ripped through his body, piercing both lungs in the

passing. The bullet was found just under the skin of the Sergeant's back. 'He is in a very serious condition,' the doctor told us, 'but we may pull him through. Another half-hour would have finished him.'"

Johnson had crossed the divide over the highest peak, an elevation of over eight thousand feet; a trip that must have been one long agony since, once above timber-line, there was no fire-wood with which to kindle a camp-fire to warm himself and thaw out frozen food and snow for drinking water. Yet the man had kept resolutely on, fighting his way through the teeth of the blizzards that whirled about him and plucked at his torn clothing.¹

The posse had come on him quite unexpectedly that morning. With Hersey in the lead, they were following his two days old trail when around a fir-fringed point ahead tramped a man on snowshoes, coming straight in their direction. Johnson—back-tracking again, but with no idea his pursuers were so close. Snatching his rifle from his sled Hersey opened fire. Slipping off his snowshoes Johnson sprinted for the shelter of the bank, only to be driven back into the open by the barrage of Hersey's bullets. Like a cornered rat he turned and blazed at his opponents. With a cry of agony Hersey fell, writhing on the blood-stained ice. As Johnson fled for the opposite bank the rest of the patrol swung into action, hemming him into the centre of the river with a whistling hail of bullets. Fiercely he flung himself down behind his pack on the naked ice and returned the fusillade. Though called on again and again to surrender, he kept up the fierce duel to the death. The first bullet hit his hip-pocket, causing the ammunition he carried there to explode and tear a huge wound in his hip. There were wounds in legs and back and shoulders, but the fatal bullet had passed through the small of his back, severing his spine.

The condition of the desperado was terrible in the extreme. Thin to the point of utter emaciation, his feet, legs and hands had been frozen, and the only food inside his pack was one lone squirrel.

The frost-scarred, unshaven, ragged and weary patrol proceeded to search the sneering corpse. He was armed with a .30 Savage rifle, a .22 calibre rifle, a sawed-off 16 gauge shotgun and

¹ The entire terrain referred to herein is familiar to the author, who was also well acquainted with most of the principals engaged in this man-hunt.

an ample supply of ammunition. In his bullet-riddled pack-sack were found two gold bridges from a man's mouth, which did not fit his own; a razor, an axe, a leather poke containing a little gold dust, and two thousand five hundred dollars in Canadian and United States bank-notes, but not a scrap of paper that would give the slightest clue to his identity.

On February 29th, to the skirling of bagpipes and the muted blare of trumpets, the flag-draped coffin containing the mortal remains of poor Spike Millen were borne through the streets of Edmonton to their last resting-place. Leading the funeral cortege marched a firing-party of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with arms reversed; pipers of the Ninth Battalion, three trumpeters of the Legion of Frontiersmen, the pall-bearers in scarlet and gold, and a riderless horse draped in funereal black and silver. Behind marched senior members of the Force, old trail companions of the murdered man, and Constable King—the first to be laid low by the bullets of the mad trapper.

A brisk word of command and rifles leapt into the air to crash out in three rolling volleys. Then came the poignant notes of the Last Post, followed by the brisker, brighter notes of Reveille.

The Johnson case—the case that had shocked the entire North and thrilled the world was closed—closed on a final note of tragedy.

Yet not entirely closed, for the true identity of the mad trapper of the Rat River has yet to be discovered. From the very first his swashbuckling attitude, his secrecy, and the large sum of money he carried secreted upon his person gave rise to the natural conclusion that he was a desperado who had come north to escape the clutch of the law. His subsequent actions, his burning and unreasoning hatred of the Police, his fortified stronghold on the Rat, and his resolute resistance to the point of death, all seem to confirm the first impression.

Yet, to-day, no more is known of "Albert Johnson's" true identity than the day Spike Millen questioned him at Fort McPherson and got coldly snubbed for his pains. True, scores of people have come forward as long lost relatives to claim his money. But, despite all this, the Silent Force continues to report that "no progress has been made towards establishing his true identity."

Probably we shall never know who "Albert Johnson" really was!

CHAPTER XXIX

THE TEMPO CHANGES

With the advent of the aeroplane the age-old methods of transportation and the everyday life and routine of every trader, trapper, Eskimo, Indian and Mounted Policeman in the land became entirely revolutionized. Almost overnight, it seemed, the North became air-minded. Indians would casually hop aboard a plane to visit friends three or four hundred miles away; trappers scouted by plane for new hunting territory, or hired air pilots to carry them and their grub-stakes to some erstwhile inaccessible spot, while aerial prospecting parties scoured the land from end to end.

It was the beginning of a new era; of a nation-wide assault upon the "frozen" frontier. With the price of gold increased from twenty to thirty-five dollars an ounce sourdoughs and *cheechakos* shouldered their packs again and hit for the tall timbers, to be followed by a surge of white adventurers, thrown out of gear by the Depression, who drifted northward in ever-increasing numbers, hoping to recoup their losses by mastering the secrets that lay hidden beneath the granite bosom of the Great Lone Land.

Where but a few short years before was naught but utter desolation, there arose from the barren rocks, as though by the touch of a magic wand, thriving settlements and busy mining camps. On the shores of Great Bear Lake, only a decade ago one of the loneliest places on earth, arose the bustling settlement of Port Radium with its post office, stores, bunk-houses and barracks, and aeroplanes flitting southward with their loads of radium-bearing ore. At lonely Yellowknife, where but a few years ago I was glad to seek shelter from Arctic cold and biting blizzards in the squalid lodges of motley Yellow Knives, gold bricks are now being poured from the wealth extracted from beneath the granite crust. At Goldfields, on picturesque Lake Athabasca, in the hunting grounds of nomad Chipewyans; at God's Lake in the heart of Keewatin, Land of the North Wind; at Island Lake, where, three decades ago, Constables Cashman and O'Neill trudged on snow-

shoes towards the haunts of pagan Saulteaux to smash the power of the aboriginal witch-doctors, have arisen frontier settlements with their square-fronted stores, their hotels of unbarked logs, and even their liquor stores and beer parlours, all linked with the great Outside by the aeroplane and radio. The entire North has thrown off the ancient shackles of the Fur Lords and gone modern. And the men of the Mounted have not been slow to adapt and streamline themselves to these new conditions.

An ardent air enthusiast, Major-General Sir James H. MacBrien succeeded Courtland Starnes as Commissioner in August, 1931. The aeroplane had demonstrated in the pursuit of the Mad Trapper of Rat River its tremendous advantage in scope, swiftness and mobility over the slow-moving dog-team in policing the white wastes of the wilderness, a lesson the new Commissioner was quick to turn to good advantage. Soon the air-borne Mountie was patrolling the northern reaches of his domain from a cruising aeroplane instead of plugging behind a tired team of refractory huskies.

Determined to make the Force air-minded, Commissioner MacBrien, in the summer of 1935, flew across the continent with Sergeant Barnes, a former dog-driver, at the controls, dropping down from the sky to inspect the various detachments along the route. The following summer the Commissioner piloted his own plane on an extensive aerial tour of his Northern empire which carried him from Ottawa to the end-of-steel at Fort McMurray, north to Great Bear Lake, the Coppermine, and the shores of the Polar Sea, on to Captain Klengenberg's old stamping grounds on ice-girt Victoria Land, west to Aklavik and across the Rocky Mountain divide to Fort Yukon in Alaska. By the time he'd flown back across the North-West Territories and over Keewatin's forested wilderness to Ottawa he had completed in a few brief weeks a ten thousand mile journey that, by dog-team, York boat and canoe, would have entailed years of arduous travel.

When, on March 5th, 1938, Commissioner MacBrien passed away he left behind him a legacy of vision, enterprise and accomplishment. With the exception of the stirring years between 1873 and 1885 when the infant Force had to blaze unknown trails, crush the rebellion of Louis Riel's disaffected *Metis*, and subjugate marauding redskins who'd followed Chiefs Wandering Spirit and Big Bear upon the war trail, it is doubtful if so much activity had ever occurred in so short a time. Doubled in strength, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, while continuing to safeguard and

patrol the frozen frontier, had extended its grip to the settled sections of the Dominion, becoming thoroughly mechanized and modernized, adding to its strength an aviation section, a marine section, and a reserve to meet the incipient threat from subversive elements within our gates . . . the Fifth Columnists of to-day.

In the North the slow-moving dog-team and canoe had given place to the distance-annihilating aeroplane and the swift-speeding motor launch, while, to the southward, the saddle horse and democrat had succumbed to the motor-cycle and the squad car.

To-day the reorganized and revitalized Royal Canadian Mounted Police are under the able command of Brigadier Stuart T. Wood of Herschel Island fame, whose great-great-grandfather, Zachary Taylor, was twelfth president of the United States, and whose father, the enigmatic Zac Wood, had run the gauntlet of "Soapy" Smith and his hoodlums and spirited Police gold through Skagway. Steeped in the tradition of the old originals he fought overseas, was tried and tempered in the exacting crucible of the Western Arctic, studied modern Police methods at Scotland Yard and on the Continent, and led the picturesque Mounted Police contingent through the cheering crowds of London at the Coronation of King George VI. No one could be better qualified to guide the modernized and thoroughly efficient Force through the difficult days the war has brought to this side of the Atlantic, or to deal promptly and effectively with the subversive elements and Fifth Column traitors who have not been idle in their attempts to pave the way for Adolf Hitler and his cohorts.

It is only a little over six and a half decades since the "First Three Hundred" rode forth from the stone walls of Lower Fort Garry and Fort Dufferin on their thousand mile trek into the heart of the wild and woolly West to tame the fifty thousand scalp-hunting, horse-stealing redskins who roamed the plains, and run the rum-runners from their besotted nests at Whoop-Up, Slide-Out and other hang-outs near the border. And in that six and a half decades the men of the Royal Mounted have performed miracles of valour and enterprise in a quiet, unassuming way that has won for them the sobriquet "The Silent Force". Quietly, firmly, and unostentatiously they have blazed new trails to the outermost reaches of the Arctic. To-day the red-roofed barracks of the Mounted dot the lakes and rivers of the land from the Atlantic, to the Pacific, and north to within six hundred miles of the very Pole itself.

Three thousand rank and file now follow in the steps of that

first three hundred. But the re-christened Royal Canadian Mounted Police have kept abreast of the times. The swift-rolling auto has ousted the prancing steed and Indian cayuse. The staccato bark of the motor-driven schooner has superseded the roll of York boat oars. And the winged Thunderbird has ousted the leaky birchbark. But the gold and scarlet still remains, and with it the traditions which have made it a byword that "The Mountie always gets his man!"

EPILOGUE

WHAT does this Northland hold for the future? At present it is difficult to say. That it will develop along different lines from the country of our great neighbour to the southward goes without saying. Much of the North will ever remain a wilderness. But across its illimitable reaches will be scattered pockets of civilization with model towns, supplied with every modern convenience, including electric light and radio and linked to the Outside world with the aerial taxi and the aerial mail courier. In these communities there will be no room for the fetid overcrowding which characterizes our large cities, and the absence of mass psychology would continue to breed and foster a strong and independent spirit, the spirit of pioneer sturdiness which has formed the keynote of the development of the West.

"In this vast land," remarked His Majesty King George VI during the Royal visit of last summer, "you have still before you the rewards of pioneering and prizes of exploration. You have only touched the fringes of the great North. Once these northern wilds were considered of little value except as the home of fur-bearing animals. Now they are being surveyed and mapped and settled so far as settlement is possible. Valuable mines are being worked right up to the Arctic Circle. There, in the North, is a field of enterprise for youth which it will take generations to exhaust. I could only wish that it had been possible for me to make a trip into that region which holds so much of Canada's future."¹

True, the Northland holds much of Canada's future. True, the North is a field of enterprise for unborn generations. True, there is incalculable wealth locked beneath its granite bosom. But, if future generations are to enjoy this rich heritage, the North will need a far greater measure of protection than it enjoys at the present time. With Dictator-swayed nations out for all the booty and plunder they can get, a lone Mountie with his revolver and his dog-team will no longer be adequate protection.

No longer can Canada consider her position impregnable and

¹ His Majesty's speech at a Government luncheon given at Victoria, B.C., on May 31st, 1939.

unassailable and herself protected by a limitless ocean from the dangers of foreign aggression. The very forces that have served to open up the North have caused distances to shrink, thus making the land and, in fact, the entire Dominion more vulnerable than is generally supposed.

Already the hand of Germany has been shown in the abortive attempt made to secure control of strategic islands in the St. Lawrence, ostensibly for lumbering—but obviously for a very different purpose. And with Russia apparently drawing into closer partnership with a predatory Germany the situation becomes more ominous. It is less than fifty miles between Russian Siberia and Alaska, and even to-day native Eskimos and Mosinkos travel back and forth in their primitive skin oomiaks between the two continents, camping on the Big or Little Diomed Islands, which form a convenient half-way stopping place. On the Atlantic side there is that vast, undefended inland Mediterranean that leads into the very heart of the continent—Hudson Bay—with the hundred mile wide Hudson Straits that forms its entrance equally devoid of any effective defences.

Through Hudson Bay half of the North American continent was won for France, for England, for King Louis again, and, last of all, for no monarch at all but for a commercial kingdom. At the sub-Arctic port of Churchill the English built Fort Prince of Wales, a mighty stronghold second only to Quebec and Louisburg in strength. Cowardice gave this fortress to Admiral La Perouse, the shrewd French naval commander whose soldiery, despite their hard work, were unable to completely dismantle the mighty works and forty-foot thick ramparts. The legendary battles of Quebec and Port Royal were spectacular, yet the two great empires locked in a death struggle—not along the shores of the St. Lawrence but in a storm-tossed Hudson Bay—the back door to Canada through which France was beaten to her knees. The sea route from Hudson Bay drained Montreal's trade to a mere dribble and contributed in no small way to supplanting the Fleur-de-lis with the Cross of St. George.

Is it not within the bounds of possibility that a desperate attempt might yet be made by our enemies to cripple Canada's transportation and disrupt her industries by taking advantage of her vulnerability, establishing concealed bases somewhere in the rugged configurations of the Labrador coast or the sub-Arctic, or in some remote spot around the Bay, turning loose bombers brought in the holds of innocent-looking vessels to raise havoc in

the industrialized sections, only comparatively few air-miles to the southward?

That the German Government is familiar with flying conditions throughout the North goes without saying. In 1930 Commander Von Gronau, now high in the councils of Hitler and his cohorts, flew in Roald Amundsen's old plane from Iceland to the coast of Labrador just as General Balbo's Italian fleet of twenty-four flying-boats did only a month or so before. From Labrador Von Gronau flew on to Nova Scotia and New York. The following year he headed from the south of Greenland for the coast of Labrador, followed the rocky shoreline to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, flew up-river to Montreal, and across country to Chicago. On his third flight in 1933 he crossed the Greenland ice-cap and, in a few hours, was well over the mainland of Canada, charting his course across Northern Ontario by way of Cochrane to Detroit. A few weeks later Captain Von Gronau, as he was then, and his crew of three Germans landed their Dornier Wal flying-boat at the R.C.A.F. Forest Protection Station at Lac du Bonnet near Winnipeg. From there his flight took in the rest of Canada, going first to Cormorant Lake near the Pas, thence to the sub-Arctic port of Churchill on Hudson Bay, and across the Barren Lands to the Mackenzie valley; the journey being accomplished with the greatest of ease.

Commander Von Gronau flew as a pilot of the commercial Deutsche Luft Hansa, the civilian character of which was accepted with a grain of salt and was later proven to be the barely-concealed training source for the personnel of Germany's revived fighting force. The knowledge he acquired of flying into and over almost the whole of Canada had not been acquired by more than three or four civilian Canadian aviators at the time!

That Canada and the Canadian North were not overlooked in plans for a German *Lebensraum* is abundantly proven in Colin Ross's book, *Between the United States and the North Pole*, published recently by F. D. Brockhaus in Leipzig, Germany. Not only did this Nazi spy cover the United States five times in search of German "living-space", but he also visited the vast and almost uninhabited two million square miles of wilderness referred to in these pages and known to Canadians as "The North".

"It is a great historic question," says Herr Ross, "whether nations heavily over-populated (like Germany) will for ever suffer a few million people to possess whole continents *just because they*

got there first. Canada is like a gigantic store-room in an ancient castle. A few downstairs rooms are used, the rest are never opened. Yet in old store-rooms," he continues significantly, "one discovers many worth-while things among the junk. Store-rooms can be made roomy and light for peoples. . . . One must abandon prejudice against climate and degrees of latitude. That's why, when I began my fifth American journey, I went as far as Baffin Land!

"Those of us who travel must take to heart the admonition of the father of geopolitics," he continues with the eye of a land-hungry Nazi. "Instead of gazing like hungry ravens upon world areas and political barriers, we must strike out for those parts of the world where the New is in process of birth and spy out areas where our people can find room. . . . *Canada is one of the few remaining frontier lands of the world.* In Canada one can strike out for the Wild West as was done in the United States a hundred years ago. Only in Canada it is called the Far North. Is there anyone who would like to take possession of it? At first," he answers, "such a question sounds ridiculous. Nevertheless it is a real one. Certainly nothing on earth is any longer fixed firmly."

Germany has long turned an appraising eye on the Hudson Bay region. A German-subsidized expedition checked ice movements, soundings, water-temperatures, currents and navigating conditions in Hudson Bay and Straits as long ago as 1928, and no doubt charted shorelines and inlets with a view to a possible future blitzkrieg. The eyes of Nazi spies have been busy here in our Northern wilderness as elsewhere. In the weeks and months preceding the war, much coming and going was reported between Canadian Nazi sympathizers acquainted with our vulnerable back-door and Winnipeg's former German Consul, Mr. Rodde. From Hudson Bay the German Government secured test samples of white whale oil for use in manufacturing precision instruments for aerial navigation and for certain types of explosives, even offering to install reducing machinery at Port Churchill. Gasoline stores cached in the Far North by the Rev. Father Paul Schulte, who in recent years earned the sobriquet "The Flying Priest of the Arctic", were recently disposed of by Canadian authorities as a precautionary measure after it was learned that the priest—who had flown his plane far and wide over our Northern wilderness ostensibly conducting missionary work amongst the Eskimos—had mysteriously disappeared. As a

member of the German Imperial Air Force in the first Great War this same man was credited with bringing down several allied planes, yet for years he was free to fly all over our Northern wilderness, unhampered and unmolested!

The sudden shattering blitzkrieg on Norway and Denmark, the lightning attack on neutral Belgium and Holland, and the swift demoralization of unhappy France should make us realize more than ever that the isolation we enjoyed before the days of long-distance aeroplanes and bombers has bred a false sense of security which might be shattered overnight. That Hitler's seizure of Norway and Denmark includes a plan to secure possession of Iceland, and the Danish settlement of Greenland—Denmark's war orphan—with the ultimate object of dominating the Atlantic sea route and bringing the war to Canada is not to be doubted despite America's Munroe Doctrine. From Iceland it is only a few hours hop to Greenland, which is separated from Canadian soil at one place by a scant two hundred odd miles.

Canada has had ample time to see the danger threatening her forgotten back door, but, so far, does not appear to have done very much about it. Neither has she a regular Arctic patrol nor, apparently, has any adequate defence been devised to protect her weakest link. And if, to-day, Commander Von Gronau was to lead suicide squadrons of Nazi bombers from some concealed base in the sparsely-settled sub-Arctic to bomb centres where he'd been entertained as an honoured guest—would he be met with anything more devastating than the bullets from a Mounted Police revolver till his purpose had been accomplished?

The Mounted Police have done their duty in the North—and done it well. They have faced the forces of Indian superstition; they have tamed bloodthirsty tribes of Stone Age savages in the heart of the Polar wastes and made the Arctic and the entire North safe for whites and natives alike to live in. They have blazed new trails to within a few hundred miles of the Pole itself; coped with the vicious dregs of the gold camps, and brought order out of chaos. They are still, as they have been in the past, a vital part of the economy of the Silent Places—friend of trapper, Indian and Eskimo alike. But something more in the way of defence is necessary if the land is to be in a position to protect itself from the grasping hand of Hitlerism.

Since the completion of this manuscript considerable anxiety has been caused the United States by word that Russia is establishing (July 1940) a

large air base on the Big Diomedé Island in the centre of the fifty-six mile Bering Straits separating Russian Siberia from Alaska, and less than two miles from the American owned Little Diomedé Island. Alarmed by the threat of the Big Diomedé and the fact that his nearest garrison at Chitcot is a thousand miles away and his handful of Navy planes at Sitka a like distance from the danger spot, Uncle Sam has been galvanized into action and is starting to spend forty-five million dollars on Alaskan defences. The old order which considered three hundred soldiers sufficient to protect Alaska's half million square miles has been changed. A submarine and air base is being rushed at Sitka, a base for aeroplanes and ships at Kodiak Island and Army bases at Anchorage and Fairbanks. Arrangements are being considered between the United States and Canada for an international highway from the American border through Canada to Alaska. A back-door highway along which American troops, guns, munitions and supplies could be rushed behind the protecting ramparts of the Rockies to the heart of Alaska in case of need. Twelve hundred miles of highway from Hazelton, B.C., to connect with the Alaskan highway system is all that is needed to weld the two countries into a protective union, the estimated cost of which would be twenty-five million dollars, and provide the United States with the means of protecting Canada's western bastion by a mighty flanking movement from any assault by totalitarian enemies directed at Alaska via her 15,000 miles of undefended coastline.—P.H.G.

APPENDIX I

See Chapters XV-XVI

STATEMENT OF SINISSIAK

FOLLOWING an address over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's network by the Author, Mr. J. E. Wallbridge, K.C., of Edmonton, Alberta, who acted as Defence Counsel for Sinissiak and Uluksuk, kindly supplied the Author, under date of May 26th, 1937, with the following copy of Sinissiak's original statement, as taken by Inspector LaNauze on the preliminary trial held at Bernard Harbour (Fort Bacon):—

The accused being duly warned in the usual manner makes the following statement:

"I was stopping at the mouth of the Coppermine River and was going fishing one morning. A lot of people were going fishing. When the sun had not gone down I returned to camp and saw that the two priests had started back up the river. They had four dogs. I saw no other men.

"I slept one night. Next morning I started with one dog to help people coming from the south. All day I walked along and then left the river and travelled on the land. I was following the priests' trail. I met the priests near a lake. When I was close to them one man came to meet me. The man Ilogoak, the big man, came to me and told me to come over to the camp. Ilogoak said to me, 'If you help me pull the sled I will pay you in traps.' We moved off the same day I arrived to be near wood. Uluksuk was with me and we pulled the sled. We could not make the trees, it was hard work and we made camp.

"The next day we started back and the priests were going ahead. It started to storm and we lost the road. After that the dogs smelt something, and Uluksuk went to see what it was. I stayed behind. Uluksuk found it was a cache of the priests and told me to come over. As soon as we got there the priests came back. Ilogoak was carrying a rifle. He was mad with us when we started back from their camp and I could not understand his talk. I asked Ilogoak if he was going to kill me and he nodded his head. Ilogoak said, 'Come over to the sled' and pushed me with his hand.

"The priests wanted to start again and he pushed me again and wanted me to put on the harness, and then he took his rifle out on top of the sled. I was scared and started to pull. We went a little way and Uluksuk and I started to talk and Ilogoak put his hand on

my mouth. Ilogoak was very mad and was pushing me. I was thinking hard and crying and very scared and the frost was in my boots and I was cold.

"I wanted to go back, I was afraid. Ilogoak would not let us. Every time the sled stuck Ilogoak would pull out the rifle. I got hot inside my body and every time Ilogoak pulled out the rifle I was very much afraid.

"I said to Uluksuk, 'I think they will kill us. I can't get back now.' I was thinking I will not see my people any more. I will try and kill him. I was pulling ahead of the dogs. We came to a small hill. I took off the harness quick and ran to one side and Ilogoak ran after me and he pushed me back to the sled. I took off my belt and told Ilogoak I was going to 'relieve myself' as I did not want to go to the sled. After that I ran behind the sled. I did not want to relieve myself. Then Ilogoak turned around and saw me, he looked away from me and I stabbed him in the back with a knife. I then told Uluksuk, 'You take the rifle.' Ilogoak ran ahead of the sled and Uluksuk went after him. The other white man wanted to come back to the sled. I had the knife in my hand and he went away again. Uluksuk and Ilogoak were wrestling for the rifle and after that Uluksuk finished up Ilogoak. I did not see Uluksuk finish him. The other man ran away when he saw Ilogoak die. I asked Uluksuk, 'Is he dead?' and he said 'Yes already.' I then said to Uluksuk, 'Give me the rifle.' He gave it to me. The first time I shot I did not hit him, the second time I got him. The priest sat down when the bullet struck him. I went after him with the knife. When I was close to him he got up again, both of us were together. I had the knife in my hand and I went after him when he got up again.

"Uluksuk told me, 'Go ahead and put the knife in him.' The priest fell down on his back. I said to Uluksuk, 'Go ahead you, I fixed the other man already.' Uluksuk struck first with the knife and did not strike him, the second time he got him. The priest lay down and was breathing a little and I struck him with an axe I was carrying across the face. I cut his legs with the axe. I killed him dead.

"One man is in a creek, the first one along the side the sled.

"After they were dead I said to Uluksuk before when white men were killed they used to cut off some and eat some. Uluksuk cut up Ilogoak's belly. I turned around.

"Uluksuk gave me a little piece of the liver. I eat it. Uluksuk eat too.

"We covered up both bodies with snow when we started to go back. We each took a rifle and cartridges. We took three bags of cartridges each. We started back in the night time. We camped that night. Next morning we got back to camp as soon as it was light. I went into Kormik's tent. Kormik was sleeping and I woke him up. I told him I kill those two fellows already. I can't remember what Kormik said. Mornik, Kocha, Angibrunna, Kallun, Kingordlik went to get the priests' stuff. They started in the morning and came back the same night. Kormik had two Church shirts and some clothing. I can't remember the other things. Kormik sold the two Church shirts to A-Nautallik. I do not know what he got for them. I can't tell

any more. If I knew more I would tell you. I can't remember any more."

Witness and Interpreter.

(Signed) Witness: W. V. BRUCE, Cpl.

(Signed) Interpreter: ILAVINIK.

(Signed) C. D. LANAUZE, J.P.

Kormik wanted to kill Ilogoak for his rifle. Ilogoak was mad with him and would not stop any more so he left his camp.

(Signed) Interpreter: ILAVINIK.

(Signed) Witness: W. V. BRUCE, Cpl.

(Signed) C. D. LANAUZE, J.P.

NOTE: The Ilogoak referred to herein is Father LeRoux.—P.H.G.

APPENDIX II

See Chapters XV-XVI

STATEMENT OF ULUKSUK

FURNISHED by courtesy of J. E. Wallbridge, K.C., who acted as Defence Counsel for Sinissiak and Uluksuk:—

"I was at the mouth of the Coppermine River after the lakes froze over. We were fishing there. Kormik and the two white men Ilogoak (Reverend Father LeRoux) and Kuleavik (Reverend Father Rouvier) had one camp between them.

"Kormik wanted to kill the two white men because they were angry with him as he had put away their rifle and his wife had put away some of their white men's food.

"After the white men left to go up the river Sinissiak and I followed their trail, we wanted to get to the people who were behind.

"It was the day after the priests had left that we met them on the river.

"The tall man Ilogoak said to me, 'If you will help us I will give you traps, we want you to go with us as far as the trees.'

"On the first day the priests were not angry with us, we camped with them one night and we did not reach the trees. We made a small snowhouse for the priests. The next day the priests were angry with us and said, 'If you take us to the woods we will give you traps.' We started and I was ahead pulling the sled. Sinissiak was close to the sled and the two white men behind. I wanted to speak and Ilogoak put his hand over my mouth. I wanted to take to my wife sewing clothes for Ilogoak in the fall.

"Kuleavik gave Ilogoak a rifle and a knife and Ilogoak pointed the gun at us. I was afraid and I was crying. Every time I wanted to talk Ilogoak put his hand over my mouth.

"We went on and Sinissiak said to me, 'We ought to kill these white men before they kill us,' and I said, 'They can kill me if they want to, I don't want to kill any people.'

"Sinissiak then said, 'I will kill one of them anyway, you had better try and be strong too.'

"Ilogoak turned around and Sinissiak stabbed him from behind in the back. Ilogoak then hit me with a stick and I stabbed him twice with a knife and he dropped down.

"I took the rifle from on top the sled and threw it down in the snow. The other white man Kuleavik started to run away and Sinissiak picked up the rifle and missed him the first shot. The second shot he wounded him and the priest sat down.

"Sinissiak dropped the rifle and took an axe and a knife. I had a knife and we ran after him. When we got up to Kuleavik Sinissiak told me to stab him again. I did not want to stab him first, then Sinissiak told me again to stab him and I stabbed him again in the side and the blood came out and he was not yet dead. I did not stab him again and Sinissiak took the axe and chopped his neck and killed him.

"Sinissiak said to me, 'You had better cut him open.' I did not want to. He told me again and I cut open his belly and we eat a piece of the liver each.

"We then left Kuleavik on top of the snow and went back to the other man Ilogoak and I cut him open when Sinissiak told me to. We eat a small piece of his liver also.

"I wanted to throw the rifles away and Sinissiak said, 'You take one and I will take one.' We took three boxes of cartridges each. We then went back to the mouth of the river where the other people were.

"We took nothing from the sled except the rifles and cartridges. We got back to the camp when it was night-time. Sinissiak went to Kormik's tent. I went to my tent. I told the people we had killed the two white men and that I did not want to but Sinissiak had killed them first.

"Kormik and his wife Kocha and Angibrunna then went to get the priests' stuff.

"They came back the same night with the stuff.

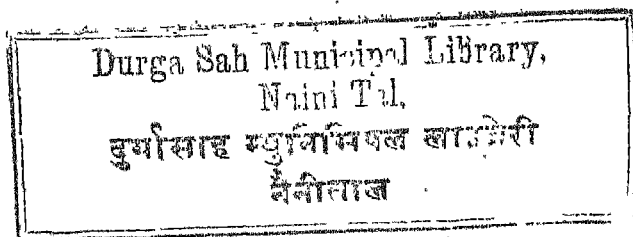
"The people took the rifle and cartridges from me.

"I have no more to speak about."

(Signed) "PATSY", Interpreter.¹

(Signed) C. D. LANAUZE, Inspector, J.P.

¹ "Patsy" Klengenberg, son of the Captain Klengenberg referred to in Chapters VII and XIX; "Patsy" being employed by Inspector LaNauze as interpreter.—P.H.G.



APPENDIX III
STATEMENT OF SOURCES

Chapters I and II

- J. L. Sansom, Chief Passenger Agent, White Pass and Yukon Railway, Whitehorse, Y.T.
Harry Anthony, Fort Yukon, Alaska. Personal conversations with Author while travelling across Alaska by dog-team in January, 1924. Harry Anthony followed the gold rush in '98.
Martin Itjen, Skagway, Alaska.
Ex-Corporal Storm Piper (formerly of the N.W.M. Police at Dawson). Letter dated Chilliwack, B.C., June 16th, 1935.
The Reign of Soapy Smith—Collier & Westrate.
Forty Years in Canada—Colonel S. B. Steele, C.B., M.V.O.
Annual Report, N.W.M. Police, 1895-1898.

Chapters III and IV

- Ex-Corporal Storm Piper, N.W.M. Police. Letter dated Chilliwack, B.C., June 16th, 1935, with newspaper clippings, etc.
Scarlet and Gold, Royal North West Mounted Police Veterans' Association, Vancouver, B.C.
Manuscript of these chapters checked and passed by Superintendent A. H. L. Mellor of the C.I.B., R.C.M. Police, Ottawa.
Annual Report, N.W.M. Police, 1901-1902.

Chapters V and VI

- Full report by ex-Corporal Storm Piper, who took an active part in the case. Manuscript of chapters checked and corrected by Mr. Piper and subsequently checked and passed by Superintendent A. H. L. Mellor, June 15th, 1936. Photos, clippings, etc., kindly furnished by Mr. Piper.
Data furnished by R.N.W.M. Police Veterans' Association, Vancouver, B.C.
Harry Anthony, Fort Yukon, Alaska.
Annual Report, N.W.M. Police, 1902-1903.

Chapter VII

- Material for this chapter was secured through personal contact with Captain Klengenbergs at Fort Norman; Arctic Red River; in

Coronation Gulf; and at Herschel Island, during the period of 1920 to 1928 when the Author was Inspecting Officer for the Hudson's Bay Company in the Mackenzie River and Western Arctic Districts. Also from personal conversations with beach-combers and others along the Arctic coast who knew his history; Pete Norberg of Coronation Gulf; Cogmollock Pete, former H.B. Company factor at Fort Bacon; Billy Philipps, who established H.B. Company post there and was removed as a result of Eskimo threats to kill him; the late Herbert Hall, District Manager, H.B. Company, for Western Arctic District; D'Arcy Arden; the late Corporal Doak, and Herschel Island Eskimos who were aboard the *Olga* during its piratical journey. All points mentioned were personally visited by the Author in 1923.

Chapters VIII and IX

The entire story was related to the Author by Staff-Sergeant K. F. Anderson in the summer of 1911 in the Lesser Slave Lake barracks of the Mounted Police where King was incarcerated. All points mentioned are familiar to the Author.

In 1935 ex-Inspector Anderson, in retirement, furnished the Author with the written details, and later corrected the original manuscript of these chapters. In July, 1935, the final manuscript was checked and passed as correct by Superintendent A. H. L. Mellor of the C.I.B., R.C.M. Police, Ottawa.

Chapters X and XI

The material in these chapters was obtained through personal contact with all the principals: Mounted Police, prisoners and dog-drivers on the spot at the time these events occurred. During part of the winter of 1907 the Author was stationed at Pepekwaotooce outpost, H.B. Company, adjoining the hunting grounds of Pecequan's Saulteaux, and heard from the Crees with whom he traded details of the arrest of Pecequan and Mistainniew. The Author was present at Norway House during the trial and, two years later, visited both Island Lake and Sandy Lake while *en route* overland to Trout Lake House and Fort Severn on Hudson Bay. In 1931, while writing up this story, the Author visited Norway House and Island Lake again and went over the details with Mr. William Campbell, formerly trader at Island Lake and now resident at Norway House.

Chapter XII

The late John Firth, H.B. Company, factor at Fort McPherson.

The late Corporal Doak of the R.C.M. Police.

Ex-Constable Harry Walker, R.N.W.M. Police, and the late Constable Blake of the R.N.W.M. Police.

Charlie Stewart, who was Dempster's guide on the search for the

Lost Patrol, furnished the writer with full particulars at Aklavik in the summer of 1923.

Photos were kindly supplied by ex-Inspector W. J. D. Dempster, now in retirement in Vancouver, B.C., September 5th, 1939.
Annual Report, R.N.W.M. Police, 1910-1911.

Chapters XIII and XIV

"I do not know anyone better qualified to write this story than yourself as you have first-hand information on the country, the people and conditions as they are in the Far North in winter. . . ." Mr. F. H. French, retired Inspector of the R.N.W.M. Police, who led the Bathurst Inlet Patrol, wrote the Author from Melville, Saskatchewan, under date of May 22nd, 1938, when his co-operation was requested in writing up this Patrol.

Information secured at numerous points visited in the North between Athabasca Landing and Hudson Bay, and along the Arctic coast, also from the following sources:

Ex-Inspector F. H. French, Melville, Saskatchewan.

Ex-Corporal "Paddy" Conway, now head detective, King Edward Hotel, Toronto, Ontario.

R.N.W.M. Police Annual Reports, 1914-1918.

Billy Phillipps, former factor for H.B. Company at Fort Bacon, Bathurst Inlet.

Pete Norberg, Arctic explorer and traveller.

D'Arcy Arden, trader at Dease Bay, Great Bear Lake, N.W.T.

J. E. Graf, Associate Director, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Major T. B. Caulkin, Superintendent "N" Division, R.C.M. Police, Rockcliffe, Ontario, who took a prominent part in the Patrol and kindly checked over and corrected manuscript of these chapters, May, 1938.

Chapters XV and XVI

Details obtained from personal contact with:

D'Arcy Arden, trader at Dease Bay.

Tim Gaudet, H.B. Company factor, Fort Norman, N.W.T.

The late Corporal Doak, and Staff-Sergeant S. Clay, who had charge of the Eskimo prisoners at Herschel Island.

Personal interview with Sinissiak and Uluksuk at Tree River, Coronation Gulf, August, 1923.

Pete Norberg.

Peter Gruben, H.B. Company factor at Kittzaguit.

Billy Phillipps, former factor, Fort Bacon, Bathurst Inlet.

Letter from J. E. Wallbridge, K.C., of Wallbridge, Cairns and Ross, Edmonton, Alberta, dated May 26th, 1937, enclosing statements of Sinissiak and Uluksuk (see Appendixes I and II). Mr. Wallbridge was appointed by the Department of the Interior as Defence Counsel for Sinissiak and Uluksuk at trials held in Edmonton and Calgary.

Annual Report, R.N.W.M. Police, 1914-1917.

Chapters XVII and XVIII

Letter from ex-Detective-Sergeant MacBrayne, formerly of the R.N.W.M. Police, now with P.P.C.L.I., Winnipeg.

R.N.W.M. Police Reports, 1914-1915.

Manuscript checked and corrected by Superintendent A. H. L. Mellor, C.I.B., R.C.M. Police, Ottawa.

Chapter XIX

Chris Harding, now in retirement in Victoria, B.C., and formerly H.B. Company, District Manager of the Western Arctic.

Late Herbert Hall, District Manager, H.B. Company, Western Arctic District.

Captain Swogger Hendrickson, former Engineer on H.B. Company motor-schooner *Fort McPherson*, and factor at Baillie Island, Western Arctic.

The late Captain Klengenberg, during numerous conversations with him at Herschel Island in October and November, 1923.

Cogmollock Pete, factor at Fort Bacon when that post was visited by the Author in 1923.

The late Corporal Doak.

Staff-Sergeant S. Clay at Fort McPherson, July, 1921, and in Winnipeg, February, 1924.

Chapters XX, XXI and XXII

Conversation with Corporal Doak during journey made together from Fort Norman to Fort Good Hope and return by dog-team, January and February, 1921. Also at Fort Norman, July, 1921, on eve of his departure for Tree River to bring murderers of Pugnana to Herschel Island.

Frequent conversations with D'Arcy Arden, trader at Dease Bay, Great Bear Lake, N.W.T., held at H.B. Company post, Fort Norman, N.W.T., summer of 1920, winter of 1921, and summer of 1923.

Meeting with Judge Dubuc and judicial party at Aklavic, July, 1923, and later at Herschel Island.

Conversations with C. H. Clarke; Aligoomiak; Tatamagama; Pete Norberg, and others connected with the case, at Herschel Island, August, 1923. Also attendance during early days of trial. Voyage aboard *Lady Kindersley* to Tree River, where all spots connected with the affair were visited and full story obtained from C. H. Clarke and from Corporal Bonshor, R.C.M. Police, who had taken Doak's place in charge of Tree River Detachment, and accompanied us back to Herschel Island aboard the *Lady Kindersley*. In November, 1923, while *en route* between Herschel Island and Shingle Point the Author met Hangman Brown and

Doctor Paddy Doyle on their way to Herschel Island to attend the execution.

The material concerning the death of Constable "Red" Macdonald was obtained from the late chief factor Brabant, Commissioner of the H.B. Company, when he consulted the Author at headquarters, Winnipeg, immediately word had been received.

Other information obtained from Inspector A. T. Belcher, R.C.M. Police, Swogger Hendrickson, H.B. Company factor at Baillie Island, and Captain Jacobsen of the H.B. Company motor ship, *Fort McPherson*, at Tree River.

R.C.M. Police Annual Reports, 1923-24-25-26.

Completed manuscript submitted to and approved by Major-General James Howden MacBrien, Commissioner, R.C.M. Police, April, 1931.

Chapters XXIII, XXIV and XXV

Information supplied by the late Gaston Herodier, H.B. Company factor, who accompanied Sergeant Joy north in the summer of 1921, established a Hudson's Bay post at Pond's Inlet, and took an official part at the inquest on Janes. In 1925 Mr. Herodier remained some time at Fort Smith, N.W.T., en route to the Western Arctic to succeed Mr. C. H. Clarke, and frequently discussed the Janes affair with the Author at his home.

Information furnished by Major Lockie Buwash, Special Agent and explorer for the N.W.T. and Yukon Branch of the Department of the Interior, who was in Baffin Land at the time of the trial, and later gave the details to the writer.

The North West Territories—F. H. Kitto, F.R.G.S.
Annual Reports, R.C.M. Police, 1921-1923.

Chapter XXVI

Inspector Alan T. Belcher, R.C.M. Police, in charge Cambridge Bay Detachment.

Constable R. C. McDowell, R.C.M. Police.
R.C.M. Police Annual Reports, 1926-1930.

Chapters XXVII and XXVIII

Information from Quartermaster-Sergeant R. F. Riddell, formerly of Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, Aklavik.

Constable R. C. McDowell, R.C.M. Police, who drove the wounded King from the Johnson cabin to Aklavik, described his trip and the other incidents connected with the chase to the writer in his home in Winnipeg when he returned from the Arctic.

Report of pursuit of Trapper Johnson by Captain W. R. (Wop) May in *Scarlet and Gold*, official organ R.N.W.M. Police Veterans' Association, 1932 issue.

Annual Report, R.C.M. Police, 1931-1932.

The Author is familiar with much of the terrain over which Johnson travelled, having travelled by dog-team across the Rockies north of this region in the winter of 1924 with Lazarus Sitchinilli, who took an active part in the assault on the Johnson cabin later, as guide; Noel Verville; Quartermaster-Sergeant Riddell, Sergeant Hersey, Inspector Eames, and Constable "Newt" Millen were all well known to the Author.

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